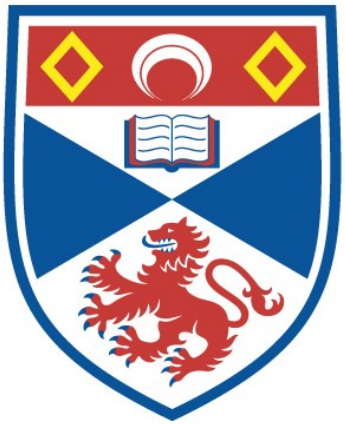
THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMON SENSE

S. A. Grave

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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The Philosophy of Common Sense

being a thesis presented by

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CAREER

I matriculated in the University of St.Andrews on 4 January 1956. On 4 January 1956 I commenced the research which is now being submitted as a Ph.D. thesis.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that S. A. Grave has spent seven terms at research work in the University of St.Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No.16 (St. Andrews) and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis in application for the degree of Ph. D.

NOTE

The quotations from Reid and Stewart are, unless otherwise indicated, from their collected works edited by Hamilton.

The quotations from Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth are from the third edition.

The quotations from Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding are from Fraser's edition. Other quotations from Locke are from the twelfth edition of his collected works.

The quotations from Berkeley are from the Luce-Jessop edition.

The quotations from Hume's Treatise of Human Nature and from his two Enquiries are from Selby-Bigge's edition of these works.

Books by these authors, and some other books, are referred to under abbreviated titles.

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Common Sense became "the Scottish philosophy" and schools several generations of Scotsmen. It "penetrated the universities", Victor Cousin[I.] says, looking back over its history in Scotland at the beginning of its history in France, "spread among the clergy, among the lawyers, among men of letters and men of the world; and, without producing a movement as vast as that of the German philosophy, had the same kind of effect within narrower limits". It had by the second decade of the nineteenth century attained with Stewart a canonical dignity in Scotland when Royer-Collard, breaking the orthodoxy of 'Condillacisme' , found in Reid and Stewart principles and doctrines for the work. As the constant foundation upon which the Eclectic philosophy then built its shifting structures, the philosophy of Common Sense became in a manner the official philosophy of France, taught in the colleges for more than half a centu The philosophy of Common Sense influenced Rosmini in Italy and the Belgian 'Ontologists' at Louvain, and dying in Europe, it had a brief American renaissan through the energy of James McCosh of Princeton.

The philosophy of Common Sense arose as an 'answer' to Hume. No past philoso er is more our contemporary than Hume. And the insistence on the authority of ordinary language , the language of common sense is of course especially contemporary. The philosophers who nowadays refer philosophical disputes to the decision of ordinary language do not characteristically think of themselves as opposing Hume; opinions similar to opinions which Hume held (but differently worded) are indeed as likely to be found among them as anywhere else. The Commo Sense philosophers thought that Hume's opinions contradicted the beliefs of Comm sense. They were perhaps not mistaken in thinking so. Mistaken or not, they ha something to say which ought to be heard in modern discussions on the nature and

I. Oeuvres (Revised edition, 1846), Vol.IV ("Philosophie Écossaise") p.645.

authority of common sense.

The philosophy of Common Sense was historically important and has again become interesting. We shall in this thesis piece it together from its fragmentary state in the writings of Reid and the other members of his school, consider it in relation to Hume, and try to show (mainly in the third chapter) the relevance of the doctrine of common sense in the philosophy of Common Sense to present-day discussion.

The members of Reid's school: Collective denunciation by Joseph Priestley who spoke of them as "a set of pretended philosophers"[1], by Kant who spoke of them as "appealing to the judgment of the crowd"[2], and by others; the label 'Common Sense'; and their dependence upon Reid bracketed Beattie and Oswald with Reid as members of a school. Beattie's philosophy is Reid's vulgarized, with the vulgar misunderstanding of the philosophers ha along with Reid was opposing. Oswald's philosophy is Reid's burlesqued. Beattie now and then makes a point which Reid has not made, or makes a point better than Reid made it. These small contributi can be built into the structure of the philosophy of Common Sense. There are no contributions from Oswald. Oswald, and to a lesser extent, Beattie, will be use when in order to see what the philosophy of Common Sense is, it is necessary to see what it is not.

George Campbell (1719-1796), principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, would count as a member of Reid's school if his concern with the philosophy of Common Sense had been less marginal.

Stewart was Reid's acknowledged successor. We shall treat the philosophy of Common Sense as ending with Stewart. Two other philosophers are sometimes recko as belonging to Reid's school. Thomas Brown (1778-1820), Stewart's pupil, and f

1. Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry etc. p.5.
2. Prolomena to any Future Metaphysics, Preface.

eleven years conjoint-professor pf moral philosophy with Stewart at the Universit of Edinburgh, attacked Reid openly and Stewart by unconcealed implication. (Whil Royer-Collard was introducing the Scottish philosophy into France as something to put in place of the philosophy of Condillac, Brown was introducing "French philosophy" into Scotland and using it against Reid and Stewart.)[I.] There was more of a family quarrel in Brown's disagreement with Reid and Stewart than he supposed, but the differences between his philosophy and their's were nevertheles sufficient to make his philosophy another philosophy. These differences will be indicated when we have their contexts.

Sir William Hamilton (1791-1856), Reid's editor and Stewart's , regarded himself as continuing the philosophy of Common Sense and giving it a powerful new development. The extent of the development would perhaps be enough to make Hamilton's philosophy another philosophy, even without a break with any of Reid's principles. If Hamilton's axiom of the relativity of all knowledge is a signific ant principle, he breaks, as we shall see, decisively with Reid.

By the 'Common Sense philosophers' then, we shall mean Reid, Beattie and Stewart. When the opinions of Reid, Beattie and Stewart need to be marked off against which opinions which simulate them, we shall reckon Oswald as one of the Common Sense philosophers, and the contrast will often be beteween Reid and Stewart on the one hand and Beattie and Oswald on the other.

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Something may be briefly said of Reid's sources. Cousin and subsequent commentators on Reid have noticed that he never mentions Turnbull. Turnbull had been Reid's teacher. Reid was not concealing a heavy debt. He had learnt from Turnbull that the method of enquiry into the mind was to be the same as the metho of enquiry into "any part of nature": the method of observation, inductive inference and the rigorous proscription of conjecture. Cousin quotes one of a

I. F. Rétoré, Critique de la Philosophie de Thomas Brown, p.v.

number of passages he might have chosen from Turnbull's Principles of Moral Philosophy (published 1740) and asks whether it is Reid or Turnbull. It could be either. Reid may have felt that he had made the proper acknowledgments in making them to Bacon and Newton as Turnbull had made his to Newton.

"And if natural Philosophy in all its Parts, by pursuing this Method, shall at length be perfected, the Bounds of Moral Philosophy will be also enlarged."[1] Many philosophical works in the eighteenth century begin with a puzzling echo of Newton's prophecy, propose, as Hume did, some application of "experimental philosophy" to "moral subjects". The application is never obvious even after the books have been studied. When we have gone some distance with Reid, we shall be in a better position to try and understand how he supposes that the rules of method which he had learnt from Turnbull and held on the authority of Bacon and Newton were relevant to a philosophy of common sense and to philosophy in general. Reid perhaps reflects Turnbull in other matters which will be noticed later on.

The anonymous translator of Buffier's Traité des Premières Vérités prefixed to his translation a "detection of the plagiarism" of "the Doctors Reid, Beattie and Oswald". He had found the book behind their books. They had paraphrased Buffier and corruptly paraphrased him. (Before the charge of plagiarism had been made, Reid remarked casually that he had "lately", about ten years that is, after he had written the Inquiry, become acquainted with Buffier's treatise. After it had been made he mentions, without mentioning himself, that he had reason to believe that neither Beattie nor Oswald had known Buffier.[2])

Buffier's opinions, if stolen by Oswald, are unrecognizable in Oswald. Beattie has borrowed all he needed from Reid. There are strong resemblances between the philosophy of Reid and the philosophy of Buffier, and no trace of

1. Newton, Opticks, Bk.III, Pt.I, (4th. edition reprinted 1931) p.405.
2. Reid's Collected Works, Note A, p.789, where Hamilton gives the references.

any dependence of Reid on Buffier. No dependence of anything in the Inquiry on Buffier; Reid's later books show some signs of Buffier's influence. A philosophy of common sense is a reaction to philosophical paradox and scepticism. The doctrines of common sense are the same in Reid and in Buffier; they could hardly be doctrines of common sense unless they were. Their doctrine of common sense is substantially the same, with just the amount of variation to be expected from their independence. The polemical features of a philosophy of common sense will alter according to circumstances. The philosophical situation is constituted for Buffier by an emergence from Cartesian doubt which has been unable to get beyond subjective certainties to anything objective; for Reid, by the inevitability of Berkeley after Locke and of Hume after Berkeley. Common sense, they both agree, is the only remedy for a situation which has resulted from a break with common sense. An obvious break, as Buffier sees it: the "first truths" of common sense, without which we are cut off from everything beyond the present states of our consciousness have been simply rejected. An unobtrusive break in Reid's opinion: the result of the theory of ideas which looked as innocent as the Trojan horse and had "death in its belly". Buffier accepted the theory of ideas.

"The primary, as well as secondary qualities of matter, cause, effect, connexion, extension, duration, identity, and almost all about which knowledge is conversant, have been represented as only qualities of our minds; truth itself, and belief, or knowledge, represented as a species of sensation: The idea confounded with its object: The esse and the percipi maintained to be universally the same and the impossibility asserted of any thing different from impressions, or various kinds of weak and lively sensation.[I.]

This is Price and might equally well be Reid summarizing the final consequence

I. Review of Morals (first edition) p.88.

of the theory of ideas. "I know nothing that can be said or done to a person, who professes to deny these things, besides referring him to common sense and reason." (p.35.) This is again Price. The Review of Morals was published in 1758, six years before Reid's Inquiry. Mr. Degerstedt[I.] has detailed the very considerable resemblances between Reid and Price. In spite of them there is no more evidence for Reid's dependence on Price than for Reid's dependence on Buffi (Reid several times mentions Price with approval in his later books.)

The doctrines of common sense, the doctrine, for example, of the necessity o a cause for every event, do not have to be borrowed by one philosopher from anot and Price has no doctrine of common sense. Reid claims to have an explanation for the development of philosophy into paradox and scepticism, and claimed originality for it. It was a development of the theory of ideas as a theory of mediate cognition, and as a theory of conceptual limitation. Locke's principles are the premisses for Hume's conclusions. Price did not examine the consequences of the principle that it is ideas that are the objects of the under standing when we think. He did examine the principle that we have no ideas tha we do not have from sensation or reflection. But there is no trace of any borro ing here in Reid from Price. And for Price it is the relativity of the senses applied to all knowledge that ends in the way described. Hume, Price appears to be saying, is Protagoras over again. Alternatively, it is Berkeley's principle the esse and the percipi universally the same - which Hume takes to its sceptica conclusion.

Reid was taught the philosophical method he professed. His philosophy of common sense is substantially his own, owing something to Aristotle, something t Descartes, more to Berkeley than to anyone else, and something to Hume. "I once believed this doctrine of ideas so firmly as to embrace the whole of Berkeley's

I. The Problem of Knowledge in Scottish Philosophy, pp.21-30.

system in consequence of it".[1] Berkeley's influence on Reid was permanent and i
obvious. And when Reid told Hume that he would always consider himself Hume's
disciple in metaphysics,[2] he was perhaps acknowledging more that he had learnt from
Hume than the consequences of the theory of ideas.

Biographical Note.

Thomas Reid: Born 1710; Presbyterian minister at New Machar, 1737; professo
of philosophy at King's College,Aberdeen 1752; appointed professor of moral
philosophy in the University of Glasgow, 1763; published the Inquiry into the
Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, 1764; the Essays on the Intellect
Powers of Man 1785; the Essays on the Active Powers of Man 1788; Reid died, 1796

James Beattie: Born, 1735; appointed professor of philosophy, Marischal
College, Aberdeen, 1760; published the Essay on the Nature and Immutability of
Truth, 1770; acquired with The Minstrel a considerable reputation as a poet in
the new mood of mournful and Gothic romance; Beattie died,1802.

James Oswald: published the first volume of An Appeal to Common Sense in
Behalf of Religion, 1766, and the second 1772. Oswald died, 1793.

Dugald Stewart: Born, 1753; studied at Edinburgh under Adam Ferguson and at
Glasgow under Reid; appointed professor of moral philosophy in the University o
Edinburgh,1785; published the first volume of the Elements of the Philosophy of
the Human Mind, 1792 (the second volume in 1821 and the third in 1827) the
Philosophical Essays in 1810 and the Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers
Man in 1828; Stewart died, 1828. Stewart as the philosopher of Edinburgh at the
end of its "golden age" was most eminent in his pupils. Among those who attended
his lectures were Sydney Smith, Francis Jeffrey & Henry Brougham, the men who founded the Edinburgh Review, Walter Scott, James
Mill, Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and Thomas Chalmers who led the Disruption.

I. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.X, p.283.

2. Reid's Collected Works, p.91.

CHAPTER I. THE SCEPTICAL PRINCIPLE

I. Ideas

Hume is the vast figure in Reid's intellectual world. Other philosophers hardly matter to him except in so far as they are implicitly Humian. And they all are, he believes. They all leave common sense at one and the same point and are on the road to Hume. Whether they speak of 'eidola' with Democritus, or of 'sensible and intelligible species' with the Schoolmen, or, since Descartes and Locke, of 'ideas', they all, according to Reid, accept the 'ideal hypothesis' in one form or another. They all hold the theory that the immediate object of every sort of cognition is some representative substitute for what we would ordinarily say that we saw or touched, that we remembered, or in any way thought of.

Briefly the theory (with what Reid regarded as the most significant reason for it) is this: When you look at a distant mountain what you directly see, leaving out all inference and interpretation, is not something miles away but its image at no distance from you. When you remember yesterday's bitter wind, what you are directly aware of is something now present doing duty for something that was once present but now is past and gone, and so no longer there to be directly accessible. When you think of happenings historically and geographically remote the alternative to supposing that the soul reaches out ectoplasmically through time and space to immediate contact with them is to suppose that what it contemplates is here and now their mediatory ideas within itself.

The ruin of worlds, the Dedication to the Inquiry declares, with virtue brought down in the general catastrophe, is involved in the principle that ideas

are the mind's only immediate objects. Sun, moon and stars, body and soul, "all things without exception" dissolve into subjective atoms as fugitive and transitory as the experience of them. For the necessary consequence of the principle that ideas are the mind's only immediate objects is that they are its only objects, the only things that there are at all. The Treatise of Human Nature showed what the principle worked out to, laid bare the universal scepticism "inlaid" in the ideal system and "reared along with it".[1] Half the credit, therefore, for the reformation in philosophy that would make Hume impossible is unintentionally Hume's. So Reid says in effect in a letter to him.[2] Reid's share in the credit was to have seen that 'ideas' had been invented by philosophers and therefore that the philosophers' principle from which Hume had validly deduced absurd consequences was a sophisticated illusion. "The merit of what you are pleased to call my philosophy", he writes to James Gregory, "lies, I think, chiefly in having called in question the common theory of ideas....I thi there is hardly anything that can be called mine in the philosophy of the mind, which does not follow with ease from the detection of this prejudice."[3]

Reid's critics did not disparage his work, as Stewart was afraid they might (with the theory of ideas decaying into an historical curiosity), on the ground that to refute something so obviously false as the theory of ideas was a small achievement.[4] The most notable of Reid's critics, Joseph Priestley and Thomas Brown, held that what Reid called 'the theory of ideas' was something he had made up himself out of his clumsy misunderstandings of the philosophers he attacked.

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1. Inquiry, Ch. I, Sec. VII, p. 103.
2. ~~Hamilton's~~ Reid's Collected Works, p. 91.
3. ~~Hamilton's~~ Reid's Collected Works, p. 88.
4. Life of Reid in ~~Hamilton's~~ Reid's Collected Works, p. 21.

Or, if, Brown allowed, the Aristotelians had to some extent anticipated him, and there were latter-day eccentrics who meant by 'ideas' more or less what Reid meant, at least Reid tried to fasten opinions on to the whole of modern philosophy which it was one of the characteristics of modern philosophy to have rejected. Reid has astonishingly acquired the reputation of having been "the overthrower of a mighty system of metaphysical illusion", when all he did was to show that the metaphorical language of philosophers was intended to be metaphorical. The old words having become mere figures of speech, his whole attack on 'images in the mind' was as pointless as a theological refutation of the poetaster who "still talks in his rhymings to his mistress of Cupid and the Graces". Nothing like what Reid thought of as 'the common theory of ideas' was held by anybody of any consequence, except Malebranche and Berkeley, after the emergence from Aristotelian darkness. I.

Brown's criticism of Reid and Priestley's have only one point in common, that Reid took philosophical metaphors literally. We shall begin with Priestley's criticism, and as there is not much of Priestley, we shall use what he says mainly as an occasion for an exposition of what Reid says. We shall be principally occupied in this section with ideas as objects of perception.

Priestley has Reid standing in foolish triumph over the theory of ideas simplified for simple refutation to the view that perception is by means of literal images, mirror-pictures, replicas of the outside world. He quotes the passage in which Reid proposes an "experimentum crucis by which the ideal system must stand or fall", and remarks that everyone knows that when philosophers

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I. The Philosophy of the Human Mind, I4th edition, pp. I68-I74. Nothing else that Brown said marked so deliberately his break with Reid's school as this denial of a great part of its historical justification.

called ideas 'images of external things' they were using a figurative expression, "denoting not that the actual shapes of things were delineated in the brain, or upon the mind, but only that impressions of some kind or other were conveyed to the mind by means of the organs of sense and their corresponding nerves." The theory of ideas, as the philosophers have held it, is the theory that external things cause sensations or ideas in the mind, and thus are perceived inferentially. Reid thinks that this theory is destroyed by the observation that sensations are not like bodies or any of their qualities - As though an effect had to be like its cause. I.

Reid had said : "Extension, figure, motion, may any one, or all of them, be taken for the subject of this experiment. Either they are ideas of sensation, or they are not. If any one of them can be shewn to be an idea of sensation, or to have the least resemblance to any sensation, I lay my hand upon my mouth, and give up all pretence to reconcile reason to common sense in this matter, and must suffer the ideal scepticism to triumph. But if, on the other hand, they are not ideas of sensation, nor like to any sensation, then the ideal system is a rope of sand, and all the laboured arguments of the sceptical philosophy against a material world, and against the existence of every thing but impressions and ideas, proceed upon a false hypothesis." 2.

It is quite obvious what Priestley thinks Reid is doing here, and hard to see what he is doing. Priestley thinks that Reid is meeting a simple assertion of similarity between things and the ideas of them with a simple

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I. Examination of Dr. Reid's 'Inquiry' etc. pp. 28-31.

2. Inquiry, Ch. I, Sec. VII, p.128.

denial. And he refutes Reid by denying that this similarity is asserted, or needed for a causal theory of perception. Priestley has misunderstood Reid, though Reid is partly to blame with a sprawling argument (or arguments) ending with the ambiguous histrionics of the crucial experiment.

There is a temptation to re-word the argument of the crucial experiment into an argument not about extension, figure and motion, but about the ideas of extension, figure and motion 'idea' throughout meaning 'concept'. Take it, however, as it stands and with Reid's meaning for 'sensation' gathered from the context, it seems to come to this : The theory of ideas supposes extension, figure and motion, in so far as they are matters of direct experience, to be 'ideas of sensation', that is , sensations. They cannot be. For what are sensations ? They are feelings. Run your finger lightly along the edge of a table and you get a sensation; press it hard against the table and you get a different sensation; press it harder still and you get a different sensation - this time one of pain. Extension, figure and motion are not sensations and are utterly unlike sensations. Therefore the external world of our direct experience is not constructed out of sensations and the images of sensations which are their fainter copies.

The philosophers may have given a peculiar meaning to the word 'sensation' and Reid may have used it up to a point[I.] more correctly. But the difference between what he explains that he means by 'sensations' and what they meant, the difference between feelings in the finger-tips as typical instances of the one and felt shapes as typical instances of the other, is a difference that will not allow his argument even to begin.

I. Up to a point, since he elsewhere speaks of sensations of colour, sound, taste and smell.

And there does not seem to be any way of reformulating it so that it will be effective against what the theory of ideas does assert; that is that the direct objects of perception have no existence apart from perception.[1]

This, however, may not have been Reid's argument at all. The crucial experiment is introduced by a discussion in which the emphasis is on "the conception of extension, motion and the other attributes of matter" (with a clear reference to Locke's account of the origin of these conceptions). The following passage comes from the general context :

"Upon the whole, it appears that our philosophers have imposed upon themselves and upon us, in pretending to deduce from sensation the first origin of our notions of external existences, of space, motion and extension....These qualities do not at all tally with any system of the human faculties that hath been advanced. They have no resemblance to any sensation, or to any operation of our minds; and, therefore, they cannot be ideas either of sensation or of reflection. The very conception ofthem is irreconcilable to the principles of all our philosophic systems of the understanding. The belief of them is no less so."[2]

I. "It has been pertinently asked...what were the experiments by which Dr. Reid made this pretended comparison [between sensations on the one hand and bodies and their qualities on the other]? Whether in comparing, as he supposed, the qualities of matter with his sensations, he did not merely compare one set of these sensations or ideas with another ? And indeed whether he could possibly do any thing else? " Reid copied this out with no comment on a scrap of paper. (Aberdeen MSS. 2I3I.3) It comes from a very favourable account of Priestley's 'Examination' in the London Review for Jan. I775.

2. Inquiry, Ch. IV, Sec. VI, p. I26.

What Reid is doing here (though still with a hint of ambiguity), and perhaps also with the crucial experiment, is trying to turn the conceptual empiricism, which he regarded as an aspect of the ideal theory, into a refutation of it. According to this ~~picture~~ feature of the ideal theory, all our ideas (concepts) are, or are complications of, ideas of sense or of reflection. What is beyond sense or introspective experience is conceptually blank. There is no meaning in the words in which we talk about it. And Reid argues: ~~'Ideas of sensation' is a round about way of saying 'sensations'.~~ Sensations are feelings such as those of touch, pressure, and so on. Our concepts of extension, figure and motion are not concepts of sensation, nor of any of the operations of our minds. They are of things that are as different from sensations as any thing can be. Therefore the theory that lays it down that we have no concepts except those of sensation and of reflection is false, and its consequence, the inconceivability of any world independent of ourselves, the meaninglessness of any description of it, groundless.

Some damage is done this time, even with Reid's misunderstanding of what had been meant by 'sensations' or by 'ideas of sensation'. Reid is attacking the theory that the immediate objects of sense are indivisible from sensation. If they are, and the principle of conceptual empiricism is added, it follows that we have no conception of extension and the other qualities of bodies as existing unsensed. Of course, with sufficient resolution, Reid's incredulity could be met with the insistence that in fact we do not have any. We shall have to come back to this matter later. In the meantime this is clear: these premisses cannot be true and the conclusion false, Locke at least is a casualty even if Berkeley is not.

Did then Reid think that the theory of ideas was a doctrine of ideal facsimile reproductions of the outside world? How could he have done so? He watched with polemical satisfaction Locke's distinction between ideas that resemble what they are ideas of and ideas that do not, dissolve away under Berkeley's criticism that ideas could not be like anything but ideas. The dissimilitude between ideas and any qualities of external things is a characteristic feature of the new theory as contrasted with the old pre-Cartesian theory of ideas. (locke had not fully realized the implications of what it is to be 'in the mind'.) It is this feature which at once prepared it for refutation - we know what the theory cannot allow us to know, that there is an external world and what it is like - and unrefuted hurried it on towards its sceptical conclusion. The old philosophy made two mistakes in its account of our knowledge of the world and was comparatively harmless. The new philosophy made only one and was deadly. Both made the mistake of thinking that ideas are the immediate objects of knowledge. But the old philosophy said that our ideas are like the things they are ideas of. We know ideas immediately and through them we are able to know what the world beyond them is like. The new philosophy went on past Locke to say that the ideas we have have no similitudes, and finally to draw the conclusion : We know them and our knowledge stops there. I.

Apart from the sceptical implications in the change, the hieroglyphic ideas, Stewart remarks, were "at least an attempt to solve the problem about the means by which the mind carries on its intercourse with things external". The substitution for them of ideas which have no more resemblance to things than the conventional signs in speech and writing

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I. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec. VI

have, left the problem altogether untouched.[1]

Yet, however improbably, Reid sometimes forgets what he emphasizes so carefully. On the second of the alternative locations which had been proposed for ideas - "in the mind" or "in the brain" - he is at his best against nonsense of which he is himself at least the only distinguished author.

The physiological theories of perception which went beyond systematizing the results of experimental investigations into the behaviour of parts of the body when we see, hear, touch, taste and smell, and offered explanations of what it is to see, hear and the rest were, in Reid's opinion, guesses at the machinery which performed the impossible function of shifting images of things from the sense organs to the brain, in order to have them perceived there by the mind and mistaken for things outside. After a list of the physiologists' conjectural 'engines' (which angered Priestley by its contemptuous inaccuracy)[2] - hydraulic machines operating with animal spirits, stringed systems of vibrating chords, wind instruments and elastic ether - Reid goes on :

"Since, therefore, a blind man may guess as well in the dark as one that sees, I beg leave to offer another conjecture touching the nervous system... Why may not the optic nerves, for instance, be made up of empty tubes, opening their mouths wide enough to receive the rays of light which form the image on the retinae, and gently conveying them safe, and in their proper order, to the very seat of the soul, until they flash in her face ? ...

"It is a peculiar advantage of this hypothesis, that, although all

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1. Elements, Vol. I, Note S, p.502.

2. A disgrace to Reid and to his university. Examination, p.102.

philosophers believe that the species or images of things are conveyed by the nerves to the soul, yet none of their hypothesis shew how this may be done. For how can the images of sound, taste, smell, colour, figure and all sensible qualities, be made out of the vibrations of musical chords, or the undulations of animal spirits, or of ether ? We ought not to supposev means inadequate to the end."[I.]

What, Reid asks, can anyone possibly be supposed to mean by images of heat, cold, hardness, softness, sound, smell and taste in the brain ? The shapes of things might be able to have images there, but not their colours in its darkness. "With regard to most objects of sense, the phrase is absolutely unintelligible, and conveys no meaning at all." And that we perceive " images in the brain, and external objects only by means of them" is "as improbable as that there are such images to be perceived. If our powers of perception be not altogether fallacious, the objects we perceive are not in our brain, but without us. "[2.]

When Newton spoke of the 'sensible species' of things brought through the nerves to the sensorium "that there they may be perceived by their immediate presence"[3.] to the mind; when Locke, adding at least the appearance of a further inconsistency to the tangle of his theory, echoed Newton with a remark about the brain as "the mind's presence room" to which ideas are admitted in audience,[4.] it is incredible that they could

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I. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec. XIX, p.179.

2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. IV, p.257.

3. Opticks, Pt. III, Qu. 28, 4th edition, (reprinted 1931) p.370.

4. Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. II, Ch. 3.

have meant that when we see something, the mind is viewing tiny pictures painted on flesh, that when we taste and smell there are faint tastes and smells under the skull and so on. Reid was grossly mistaken.[I.] The images perceived in the brain are not really images. Still his objection remains that nothing is perceived in the brain. 'Images' or 'ideas' in the brain mean, no doubt, impressions of some kind or other on the brain. But what does it mean to say that these are perceived ? When this word in turn gets a plausible sense given to it, all that is left of the original mystery is the banality that certain modifications of the brain are causal antecedents of perception. 'Ideas in the brain' are no longer alternatives to 'ideas in the mind' as the immediate objects of perception.

Reid would go further and reject all talk of 'causal antecedents to perception' if more than 'constant conjunction' is meant, if it included any suggestion that anything that goes on in the body does anything to the mind. We know nothing whatever about the nature of the connection between the two and any ways of speaking that throw an illusory bridge over the gap have to be repudiated. In particular, Reid will not have 'impressions' made upon the mind. There is no neutrality in this word as a philosophers' word. It is dangerous long before it acquires the formidable powers that it has in Hume's vocabulary. Impressions are

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I. Reid was always convinced that he had to deal with cerebral replicas of sensible qualities. See also Philosophical Orations, edit. W. R. Humphries (Aberdeen University Press), p.35.

made on wax and things like wax, and what Reid is resisting is the suggestion that the mind is in any way a thing like wax. If impressions are made on the mind, we shall next be hearing how this is done, and it will be in one of the ways in which body acts on body. With the progressive corporealization of the mind, the uniqueness of its activity disappears from view.

Ordinary language has a metaphorical use for 'impressions on the mind': something or other made a great(little, or no)impression on somebody's mind. And just because it has this use, I cannot say "that an object I see with perfect indifference makes an impression upon my mind." We know the literal paraphrases of the every day metaphor according to the context in which it occurs. The philosophical metaphor has us baffled. "If philosophers mean no more but that I see the object, why should they invent an improper phrase to express what every man knows how to express in plain English?" [1] It is, of course, theory which drives them into strange speech, and theory that "contradicts the common sense of mankind," which does not think of perception as anything's action on the mind or as the mind's action on anything. It thinks of perception as an action of the mind certainly, but, if one may reluctantly borrow the Schoolmen's language, as an immanent and not a transitive action. [2]

How would Reid have dealt with the argument that perception is not an action at all, any more than winning a race is an action ? [3] There is no reason why he should not have admitted that he had shared with philosophers in general an insensitivity to the logic of verbs of perception. Then his reply would

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. IV, p. 254.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XIV, p.301.
3. G. Ryle Dilemmas , p.99 ff. ; The Concept of Mind, p.

presumably be along the lines of a recent reply to Professor Ryle: "But, even if we concede that 'see' is always, and without qualifications, an achievement word, so to class it does not banish out of existence the process of visual experience. On the contrary, seeing, like any other successful termination, presupposes the process which it terminates: a race to be won must be run." [1]

We do not perceive ideas in the brain, and if our powers of perception are not altogether fallacious, we are not in employing them, contemplating ideal objects in the mind either. The reason why ordinary people "look upon it as perfect lunacy to call in question the existence of external objects" is that they never doubt that they see and handle them. [2] We have the same reason for thinking that what we see and touch is external to us and independent of us as for thinking that it is there at all. [3] It makes no difference ... whether the supposed mediators are regarded as separate both from what they represent and from the perceptual act, or whether they are regarded as inseparable aspects of the perceptual act. It is their presence at all that common sense cannot understand.

In the "perception of an external object, all languages distinguish three things - the mind that perceives, the operation of that mind, which is called perception, and the object perceived... Philosophers have introduced a fourth thing in this process, which they call the idea of the object." [4] The same three-termed structure of agent, act and object is the linguistic scaffolding for the description of memory, imagination and thought. Here again the

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1. W. R. F. Hardie, 'Ordinary Language and Perception', Philosophical Quarterly, April 1955, p. 108.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. VIII, p.274.
3. Stewart, Philosophical Essays Pt.I, EssayI, Ch. I, p.57.
4. Intellectual Powers II, Ch. XII, p.293.

philosophers have wedged in a fourth thing between the second and third terms. The 'fourth thing' in Brown's opinion, is an optical illusion of Reid's as far as the main tradition of modern philosophy is concerned; turning to modern philosophy after looking hard at ancient philosophy he sees double. And having dislocated ideas from their unity with the act of cognition, he proves that there are no ideas. He could not recognize his own opinions when he saw them in other philosophers. On the question of perception, for example "so far is Dr. Reid from having the merit of confuting the universal, or even general illusion of philosophers, with respect to ideas in the mind, as images or separate things, distinct from the perception itself, that his own opinions as to perception, on this point at least, are precisely the same as those which generally prevailed before. From the time of the decay of the Peripatelic Philosophy, the process of perception was generally considered as involving nothing more than the presence of an external object, an organic change or series of changes, and an affection of the mind immediately subsequent, without the intervention of any idea as a fourth separate thing between the organic and the mental affection. I have no doubt that, with the exception of Berkeley and Malebranche, who had peculiar and very erroneous notions on the subject, all the philosophers, whom Dr. Reid considered himself as opposing, would, if they had been questioned by him, have admitted, before they heard a single argument on his part, that their opinions, with respect to ideas, were precisely the same as his own. "[I]

Reid often speaks, as in the passage last quoted from him, as though he

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I. Brown, The Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lecture XXVII, (14th edition) p. 174.

thought that philosophers thought of ideas as separate entities;separate that is from the awareness of them. And he often worked on the contrary assumption that philosophers regarded ideas as identical with the awareness of them. Thus in the crucial experiment 'ideas of sensation' are sensations, and sensations for Reid are experiences which have no object distinct from themselves.[1] It may be true that Reid did not distinguish clearly between, in Hamilton's words, the 'gross' and the 'subtle' form of the theory of ideas. It is not true that he did not allow for the subtlety of the identification of ideas with the cognitive acts as their objective aspects. He did, and meant his arguments to reach it.[2] He was not denying the existence of ideas as separate objects, but as objects, and therefore denying what philosophers had been asserting, whether they held the theory of ideas in gross or subtle form. Ideas under another name perhaps do figure as direct objects in Reid's own theory of perception. If they do - we shall be considering this question in the fifth chapter - it would have been no justification for Reid to say that no one could say that the ideas in his theory were separate entities.

'Idea' is and was by Reid's time a word in ordinary, everyday use. To have an 'idea'of something is to think of it, or to imagine it, or to remember it (the thinking, remembering,imagining, all with some hesitancy or vagueness.) Men's 'ideas' are their opinions. In these senses it goes without saying that we have ideas. 'Idea', however has another meaning in the vocabulary of philosophers. In this other meaning "it does not signify

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XVI, p.310.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XII, p.292.

that act of the mind which we call thought or conception, but some object of thought," some object even of perception.[1] These idea-objects are the illusory ideas; ideas as "that which we think about."[2] The double meaning of 'idea' gives the denial that there are ideas an irritating sound of paradox, when its sense is a protest against paradox.

Reid does not suggest that the philosophers' use of the word 'idea' was a misuse of it. He was probably right not to. One might conjecture that the suggestion of duality in the ordinary phrase 'having an idea of' was there to be misinterpreted; the noun given something to designate and the objectification of ideas the result. Too often, though, in the detection of the sources of philosophical theory in misunderstood idiom, it turns out that the idiom which is supposed to have produced the theory was produced by the theory, and in this case there is some reason to think that 'having an idea' passed from technical into common use.[3]

If, however, the idiom is not significant for the origin of the theory of ideas, it has some significance for its eighteenth century development. For once 'to have an idea of' had established itself in ordinary use as a near alternative for 'to think of', 'remember' and 'imagine', and once

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1. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.I, p.225. Cp.II, Ch.XIV, p.298.
2. Lectures on Pneumatology, Aberdeen MSS, 2I3I.5.
3. The Oxford English Dictionary says that the word 'idea' was first adopted into modern languages in its developed Platonic sense of 'archetype,' 'pattern,' 'standard.' It then seems to have acquired a pre-Platonic meaning of 'figure' or 'visible form.' The earliest reference the Dictionary gives to 'knowing an idea' in the sense of 'having a conception' is to Hobbes. Reid speaks of the comparatively recent introduction of the word in this use into "popular discourse," and of its being more common in French than in English. (Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.I, p.224.

philosophers (prepared by the Cartesian extension of 'perception' to cover all the cognitive acts) had accustomed themselves to the strangeness of rendreing 'to perceive' by 'to have an idea of,' idealism would begin to acquire a sort of linguistic necessity. Obviously it is impossible for ideas to exist any longer than we have them, as obviously as that we are thinking only as long as we are thinking.

Since the word 'idea' has this act and object ambiguity, it is not always clear how we are to interpret statements like "I take...the idea of an object and the perception of an object to be the same thing."[1] They may be expressing Reid's own doctrine: that is rejecting altogether ideas as objects while allowing them as ideas of objects, 'having an idea of an object' meaning nothing but thinking of it, or imagining it, remembering, or in the regrettably widened use of the phrase, perceiving it. On the other hand, they may be doing something quite different. They may be multiplying entities while appearing to reject their multiplication, rejecting ideas as objects distinct from'perception' in order to re-assert them as objective components of'perception.' The opposite meanings of which such statements are capable explains why Reid was unsure as to whether or not he was encountering the ideal theory when he encountered them in Arnauld.

The view that exchanges ideas as separate entities, for ideas which form an inseparable unity with the awareness of them, has against it the common sense insistence that the operations of the mind and their objects are quite different things; so different, Reid says, that many assertions true of the object would not even be false of the awareness of it, but absurd.[2] And indeed when the

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I. Arnauld,'Des Vraies Et Des Fausses Idées,' Ch.5, Oeuvres,Tome XXXVIII. p.198.

2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. IX, p.277.

ideas are ideas of sense, the assertion of their identity with the act of perception is quite especially puzzling,[1]

To develope some hints of Reid's on this point: When 'idea' is taken in the theory sense as meaning the direct object of an act of perception, what is meant by 'the unity of the idea and the perception?' What is meant by the idea and the perception not being distinct, 'but the same, a modification of the mind and nothing more?'[2] Surely not the nonsense that when we see something red and round the seeing of it is red and round. Then what do the 'unity' and 'identity' mean? 'Modification' does not have its ordinary, every-day sense of 'alteration' here. It is a technical term, and according to the traditional conventions in metaphysics for its technical employment, you can only say that X is a modification of Y when you are prepared to say Y is adjectivally X; if redness is a modification of the tomato, the tomato is red. If ideas are modifications of the mind in this sense, they have moved so completely into the mind that 'in the mind' is a phrase without any sense left to it at all.

The unity and identity then, of the idea and the having of it is not of the kind that allows the transposition of predicates. What kind of unity or identity is it? What corrections does the subtle theory of ideas want to make in the crude theory? The dependence of ideas for existence on their being perceived is common to both, so the language of identification cannot be merely an extravagant way of asserting that dependence. What more is it asserting? No plausible meaning appears to replace the obvious and impossible one.

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1. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec. XI, p.155; Intellectual Powers,,Ch. I, p.221; Aberdeen Mss.,2131.6.

2. Brown. The Philosophy of the Mind. pp.171 & 174.

If, however, the view that identifies ideas and perception, in order to become intelligible turns into the view that separates them, the view that separates them, in order to become intelligible turns into the view that identifies them. What can 'in the mind' mean in this context except ' modification ' of the mind? Contained in the mind? The mind has no dimensions. Perhaps it is only an extravagant way of asserting that ideas depend for their existence on being perceived. If it is, the reason for their dependence seems to have gone. One had supposed that the reason why ideas had no existence when unperceived was that they were 'in the mind,' the only 'place' where ideas could be. One had construed these metaphors to mean that an act of perception and its ideal object were not two things, but one and the same thing, that an idea can be no more separated from the perception of it than a thing can be separated from itself. Difficulties are proposed about the unity of contraries, about the identity of extended acts with extended objects. Hylas cannot understand how there can be room in the mind for so many houses and trees. What is it to be 'in the mind?' Philonous explains that for an object to be 'in the mind' is no more than for it to be perceived.[1] Hylas does not ask him to go over once again the reasons for holding that what is perceived must be perceived in order to exist.

2. Direct Objects

What makes ideas ideas, as far as Reid is concerned, is the fact that they can exist no longer than we are conscious of them. We have now to consider ideas in more detail as direct objects, and more especially in other capacities than as perceptual objects. In doing so we shall be able to see why they were wanted.

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1. Berkeley, Three Dialogues, III, Works, Vol.II, P.250.

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"....philosophers have been led to think that, in every act of memory and of conception, as wellas of perception, there are two objects - the one, the immediate object, the idea the species, the form; the other, the mediate or external object. The vulgar know only of one object, which, in perception, is something external that exists; in memory something that did exist; and, in conception, may be something that never existed. But the immediate object of the philosophers, the idea, is said to exist, and to be perceived in all these operations."[I.]

What is it that made philosophers think this way? In a very brief summary: For perception, there are allthe reasons that can be listed under 'perceptual relativity' - the penny that would have to be at once round and elliptical, if what was directly seen by different observers was its upper surface; the jaundiced landscapes viewed through sick eyes, coinciding with the blue, green and brown world of the healthy; considerations of this sort, all seeming to point unmistakably to the conclusion that the immediate objects of sense experience are private objects. We have false memories and these have no intrinsic marks to distinguish them from true memories. While the object of a true memory could perhaps be a past event as it actually was, the object of a false memory could not be a past event as it actually was. The false object must be an idea.And how could an idea of an event be mistaken for an event? We can only suppose that the direct objects of both true and false memories are ideas, the one corresponding and the other failing to correspond to something that actually happened. Ideas, under a variety of names, came in similarly to provide objects for false beliefs and, since true and false beliefs are

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I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.369.

psychologically indistinguishable, immediate objects for true beliefs. We make mistakes in perception, memory and belief which we could not make if in perception we were face tp face with physical objects, in memory with the past, and in even true belief with facts. Finally, ideas provide imaginary objects for the mind which cannot think without objects, but can think of what does not exist.

Most of these traditional reasons for a theory of ideas were curiously ignored by the philosophers of the Common Sense school. They are all silent about the objects of false beliefs and memories. Reid and Beattie saw that perceptual relativity was a difficulty that a doctrine of direct perception had to meet and proceeded to meet it without anxiety. (Their handling of this problem belongs to the chapter dealing with the theory of perception.) It was the philosophers' conviction that ideal substitutes had to be found for non-existent objects of thought that was really significant in Reid's eyes, and he fastened on to this as one of the two great persuasives towards the theory of ideas. The other is the principle which, to give it a name, might be called the 'principle of cognitive contact.' Together they "carry us into the whole philosophical system of ideas" and he adds (forgetting the perceptual variations) "furnish every argument that ever was used for their existence." [I.] The two postulates are not independent; the second is not true if the first is false, and Reid is prepared to show that the first is false.

We shall be concerned later in this section with Reid's elimination of ideal substitutes for non-existent objects of thought and shall now consider the principles of cognitive contact. It is the epistemological analogue of "no action at a distance," ideas doing something similar to what the medium

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I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.369.

does between remote interacting bodies. Nothing further from the mind than the mind itself can be its direct object, nothing at a different time from the mind's cognitive act; anything there and then must be mediated by something here and now in order to be perceived, remembered or in any way thought of.

It is hard to believe that this principle was taken seriously by many philosophers, but it was. To give one or two instances: It weighs heavily with Locke. The following passage from his second reply to Stillingfleet is particularly interesting, as it shows ideas at their double work of annihilating distance and providing objects for false beliefs.
"Not thinking your Lordship therefore yet so perfsct a convert of Mr. J.S's [John Sergeant] that you are persuaded, that as often as you think of your cathedral church, or of Des Cartes's vortices, that the very cathedral church at Worcester, or the motion of those vortices, itself exists in your under-standing; when one of them never existed but in that one place at Worcester, and the other never existed any where in rerum natura; I conclude, your Lordship has immediate objects of your mind, which are not the very things themselves existing in your understanding." These, immediate objects, Locke says, can be called indifferently 'representations' or 'ideas'.[I.]

Sergeant opposed to Locke's theory of ideas a version of the Thomist interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine that the mind 'becomes' the thing it knows. The thing known exists in the understanding and outside it. Ideally in the understanding, really outside it, Reid would insist that Sergeant meant, and therefore he is opposing the theory of ideas to the theory of ideas. The "self same thing," Sergeant says , in two different

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I. Works (IIth. edition) Vol.IV, pp.390-391.

modes of existence; and existence, non-existence and mode of existence are logically accidental to the nature of everything except God; so that the external thing is identical with the thing in the understanding.[1]

In so far as the theory of ideas is a straightforward doctrine of double objects, the Thomist doctrine reproduced by Sergeant is plainly not a form of the theory of ideas, but what interests us here is the way it conforms to the principle of cognitive contact: If not a representative of the thing, thenthe thing itself must be in the mind in order to be known.

Malebranche supposes that he can take for granted that distant objects are perceived by means of ideas. It is quite improbable that the soul moves out of the body to where the objects are and impossible that remaining where it is, it could perceive them across distance.[2] Reid's examples are from Newton and Clarke. Clarke says:

"Without being present to the Images of things perceived, it [the soul] could not possibly perceive them:....a Living Substance can only there perceive where it is present, either to the Things themselves, (as the Omnipresent God is to the whole Universe;) or the Images of Things, (as the Soul of Man is in its proper sensory). Nothing can any more Act, or be Acted upon, where it is not present; than it can Be, where it is not."[3]

The principle of cognitive contact is behind the theory of ideas, Behind the principle is the false analogy between the behavior of bodies and minds, the analogy which, according to Reid and Stewart, is always devastating the philosophy of the mind, and here persuading us to look at cognition after

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1. Solid Philosophy Asserted, P. 38 ff.
2. Recherche de la Verite, Bk. III, Pt.II, Ch.I.
3. Papers between Leibnitz and Clarke (1717 edition), pp. 41-42; Reid, Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.IV, p.255.

the model of a physical transaction, involving like it contiguity in space and time. Then when the damage is done, the analogy, Reid thinks, is arbitrarily given up. We can admittedly love and hate what is absent. Why must the mind in its intellectual operations, though not in its affections and desires, be always in immediate contact with its objects, acting on them or being acted on by them?[1]

We do not, of course, know how we perceive or remember or think of things out of immediate contact with the mind. But then neither do we know how things in immediate contact with it would be perceived. (Has 'in' or 'out of contact' any meaning at all in this context?) In any case, perception is not a simple consequence of contact. When anyone explains to Reid how we perceive ideas, he will undertake to explain how we perceive things further away.[2] Memory mediated by ideas is not any more intelligible than memory with out them. Ideas are contemporaneous with the act of remembering but not with the past events they represent. The difficulty, if it is one, is exactly what it was before. Thought about what is separated from us in space and time is not explained by doubling up its objects into direct and indirect; distance now lies between these. Apply the principle of cognitive contact rigorously, and the world shrinks in duration to the present and in dimensions to the circumference of the mind. Apply it only until objects are split into direct and indirect, and the original difficulty is not touched. We are quite in the dark as to how we perceive, remember and think of things and, as an explanation, the theory of ideas leaves us there.

No light on the mechanics of perception, memory and thought and in addition these familiar things become unrecognizable - memory especially. What is

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I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch. II, p.369.

2. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec. XII, p. 157.

memory when the theory of ideas has been to work on it?

"...the mind has a power in many cases to revive perceptions which it had once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before."[1] - We would not have known that this was memory unless Locke had told us that it was.

"We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea; and this it may do after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea; or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea."[2] The first of these is memory, Hume says, the second imagination.

Again we have to be told that these are memory and imagination. The definitions "convey no notion of the thing defined" and "they may be applied to things of a quite different nature from those that are defined." For example, to a man banging his head against a wall (impression); bumping it gently (diminished vivacity - memory); just touching the wall with his head (no vivacity - imagination).[3]

Is memory unrecognizable in these descriptions of it by Locke and Hume, because the descriptions are fragments torn off complete accounts of memory? No, the rest can be added; the Lockian metaphors - the mind a repository, its power to repaint its perceptions upon itself - all that Hume has to say about the images being tied down in an invariable order and even about their feeling of authenticity; the descriptions still need sign-posting. Do we just not

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1. Locke, Essay, Bk.II, Ch. X, (Fraser's edition) Vol.I, p. 194.
2. Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, Bk.I, Pt. I, Sec. III, p.8.
3. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch. VII, p.357.

understand the technical language in the descriptions? (Reid's comment on Hume gets its satirical edge from pretending not to.) It is not that either. When we have learnt the new uses for 'perception', 'impression' and 'idea', the descriptions remain opaque. Is the trouble perhaps that we are looking for less than we are being given? Locke and Hume are not trying to tell someone who does not know what memory is what it is; they are analyzing memory, disclosing the structure of a familiar thing. But description or analysis, they are equally baffling. 'The mind reviving a perception with the additional perception of having had it before', 'an impression again making its appearance'; taken literally these are self-contradictions, since, by definition, perceptions and impressions disappear for ever as soon as the experience of having them is over.[I.] Then they are not to be taken literally.

There are two real possibilities of a meaning for them that will survive examination, and an illusory third. To 'revive a perception' (or to 'repeat an impression') might be a completely unilluminating synonym for 'to remember'. Completely unilluminating, because no explanation of the meaning of the phrases is forthcoming except that they mean the same as 'to remember'. That is one possibility . What the phrases may be intended to convey is the statement that memory is knowing the past indirectly through its present representative image. But this statement breaks down on examination. Either we do know the past in memory or we do not. If we do, we have got through and beyond the present image to it. It was only temporarily an indirect object. Once this is realized it becomes clear that there never was any indirection in memory knowledge.(We may fumble through 'ideas' towards memory, but while we are on the way to remembering we are not remembering.) There never

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I. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.VII, p.357.

were two objects, direct and indirect in remembering; only one, something in the past. The duplication of objects is an unintelligible complication.[1] The other possibility is that we do not know the past, or, if you like, that knowing the past is nothing but having a present experience which has a certain special quality ('vivacity' - whatever that means, unless it means simply 'remembering'). There are not two objects; only one, something present. But memory has gone even if its name is being kept. The sign that it has gone is that the distinction between true and false memory has to go. If you are equally convinced that you are remembering when you are remembering and when you are only imagining, if both experiences have the same degree of 'vivacity', have an equally strong feeling of authenticity, then, by definition, both are remembering. The evolution of the theory of ideas shows itself in the passage from Hume just quoted with its Lockian beginning and Humian end.

"The knowledge which I have of things past, by my memory, seems to me as unaccountable as an immediate knowledge would be of things to come."[2] Memory has disappeared when the theory of ideas has finished explaining how it is possible. We are in no great danger of taking the impressions on the brain, spoken of in physiological theories of memory, as surrogate memory-objects. These impressions are supposed to function causally in memory. And there may be tracings on the brain left from our past experiences, for all Reid knows and for all the theorist who has conjectured their existence knows. Let us agree that there are. How does their presence make memory any more intelligible? Perhaps if we knew more about their nature the question would be answered. We know all there is to know about the impression which a pin makes in the hand when it pricks it. But can any philosopher say how pain is caused by this impression? If we had a complete description of the state of the brain which is

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.IX, PP.278-279; Vi, Ch.III, p.227.
2. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.VII, p.354.

supposed to cause memory "we should still be as ignorant as before how that state contributes to memory. We might have been so constituted that the prick of a pin in the hand, instead of causing pain, should cause remembrance; nor would that constitution be more unaccountable than the present."[1.]

Reid has an analysis of perception into a complexity of sensation, conception and belief. Without needing to know any more about it at present, we can see that it will not be easily reconciled with a theory of direct perception. Memory and imagination he left simple. Memory involves belief (in the past existence of what is remembered) as a consequence,not as a component. There is no belief in imagination. Stewart breaks up the simplicity of memory and adds belief to imagination.

You cannot remember an event without a conception of it; you cannot remember it without a belief in its past existence. "...the rememberance of a past event is not a simple act of the mind... the mind first forms a conception of the event, and then judges from circumstances of the periodof time to which it is to be referred."[2.] Memory is the reference of a particular conception to a past event.. The ideal version of memory seems to be vaguely back again.

This , however would probably be to misinterpret Stewart. Although he occasionally uses the language of representation (as in the definition of 'conception' in the Outlines),[3.] when he speaks of conceiving a thing, all he means is thinking of it, not thinking of it through an intermediary. In memory something is first thought of without any location in time and subsequently dated. Why there should have to be this sucession Stewart does not explain. It is as though he thought that all remembering begins with the hesitancy of

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I. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.VII, p.354.

2. Stewart, Elements, Vol.I, Ch.VI, Sec.I, p.350.

3. Collected Works, Vol.II, p.3.

"Yes, it was Wednesday because...."only more so, so much more so that to begin with it is only conception becoming memory. But Stewart does not want to deny the "apparent instantaneousness"of memory judgements. The analogy he finds illuminating is with the "estimate of distance we learn to form by the eye".[1]

There is no conception and no imagination, in Stewart's opinion, without a temporary belief that what is conceived or imagined is real. We should perhaps have the distinction that he draws between conception and imagination before us . "The business of conception....is to present us with an exact transcript of what we have felt or perceived"('conception' implying "no idea of time whatever"). Imagination is the power "to form new wholes" out of these transcribed materials.[2] "I am at a loss to know," Reid wrote, "whether according to your meaning of the word conception, I may conceive a golden mountain, a centaur, or a man only a foot high. These are not transcripts of what I have perceived. I think it is memory only that gives us exact transcripts of what we have perceived or felt."[3] Stewart is clear enough. (He is not claiming that his meaning for 'conception' and 'imagination' is their "proper English meaning".) The gold mountain is 'imagined'; Ben Nevis is 'conceived' if it is pictured as it was when seen on some past occasion; it is remembered if the thought of the past occasion is added to the conception.

Why does Stewart think that what is conceived or imagined is momentarily taken to be real? The characteristics of any form of mental activity, he says, stand out clearly when nothing interferes with it; and we find that when

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1. Elements, Vol.I, Ch.VI, Sec.I, p.351.
2. Elements, Vol.I, Ch. III, pp.144-145.
3. Criticism and Remarks on Stewart's "Elements", Aberdeen MSS., 2131.4.

imagination wholly absorbs our attention, as in dreams, at the theatre and so on, we cannot help being swept into belief.[1] Reid is completely sceptical. "I can conceive the steeple of the cathedral church of Glasgow standing upon its point.... I cannot find a vestige of belief accompanying it. If there be any", he adds referring to another of Stewart's theories which he disliked, "it must be one of those hidden operations which are accompanied with no memory."[2]

Memory and imagination, in Stewart's account of them thus move close together. The materials presented by experience are reorganized in imagination. Otherwise memory and imagination are reparated only by a difference in the relative strength of the belief involved in them. Add the ambiguous analysis of perception into sensation-conception-belief, which Stewart shared with Reid, and Stewart can be seen to be some distance along the road to what Reid regarded as the sceptical conclusion of the ideal principle: the real, the remembered and the imagined as higher and lower on a single scale of intensity.

The ordinary man thinks that he can think of what does not exist. He has, according to Reid, the authority of philosophy ancient and modern against him. "The philosopher says, Though there may be a remote object which does not exist, there must be an immediate object which really exists; for that which is not, cannot be an object of thought."[3]

This is the second principle behind the theory of ideas and its falsity infects the first. Contact with an object cannot be a cognitive necessity if we can think of what does not exist and is therefore incapable of acting on the mind or being acted on by it. The ordinary man is content with the

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1. Elements, Vol.I, Ch.III, p.149ff.
2. Criticism and Remarks on Stewart's "Elements"
3. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.369.

fact that he can remember what did exist, perceive what does exist and imagine what does not exist. He is not interested in how this is done. Philosophers are. And looking round for explanations they found the too obvious models: For cognition in general, the modification of bodies by mutual contact and impulse, with,Stewart remarks, its illusory appearance of transparent intelligibility. (Pervasively recommending the appropriateness of the model, the etymological roots of familiar words for intellectual activity go down into the tactual notions of taking hold of, moulding the hand round and others of the same kind.) And an everyday experience was there to illuminate the supposition of representative ideas. We are "accustomed to see objects by their images in a mirror, or in water;and hence are led, by analogy, to think that objects may be presented to the memory or imagination in some similar manner."[I.] For conception and imagination[2.] specifically, the analogy with painting was to hand, and the whole apparatus of metaphor derived from it. The real and the unreal can be painted and conceived. Many of the adjectives that describe a painting - clear, distinct, vague, blurred,accurate - describe a conception. There are ontological temptations in the noun 'conception' and its adjectives(from which the corresponding verb and its adverbs are free) and more especially so,since analogy has made'having a picture in the mind' an ordinary synonym for 'having a conception of' something. It is important to see where the analogy breaks down. When a man is painting, his action is bringing something into existence. When he has finished painting, there is a picture there. Painting is a "transitive act, which produces an effect distinct from the operation". Suppose a man merely conceives his picture and does not go on to paint it. "What is this conception? It is an act of the mind, a kind of thought." Does it produce some object? None at all. When we conceive of

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I. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XIII, p.296.

2. Reid's meaning for 'conception' is too complicated to be put in a few words and will have to be shown as we go along. As a very rough indication beforehand, it is what the logicians meant by apprehensio simplex, but extended to individuals. Imagination in Reid is visual 'conception'.

something, there is nothing in the mind except the act of conceiving. ... [1] 'Having a picture in the mind' of something means no more than 'having a conception' of it, and that means no more than conceiving it. To claim the sanction of ordinary language for objective images in the mind is to misunderstand the language just "as if, from the phrases of deliberating and balancing things in the mind, we should infer that there is really a balance existing in the mind for weighing motives and arguments." [2]

Every conception must have an object, because every conception is of something. When it is a conception of Rome, Rome is the object. When it is a conception of Caesar crossing the Rubicon, Caesar crossing the Rubicon is its object. When it is the conception of the colour white, the whiteness in anything white is its object. When it is a conception of something that has never existed what is its object? The centaur, for example.

"The philosopher says, I cannot conceive a centaur without having an idea of it in my mind. I am at a loss to understand what he means. He surely does not mean that I cannot conceive it without conceiving it. This would make me no wiser. What then is this idea? Is it an animal, half horse and half man? No. Then I am certain it is not the thing I conceive. Perhaps he will say, that the idea is an image of the animal....This one object which I conceive, is not the image of an animal - it is an animal. I know what it is to conceive an image of an animal, and what it is to conceive an animal; and I can distinguish the one of these from the other without any danger of mistake." [3]

The circle..."What is the idea of a circle? I answer, It is the conception of a circle. What is the immediate object of this conception? The

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1. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.I, pp. 362-363.
2. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.373.
3. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.373.

immediate and the only object of it is a circle. But where is this circle? It is nowhere. If it was an individual, and had a real existence, it must have a place; but, being an universal, it has no existence, and therefore no place. Is it not the mind of him that conceives it? The conception of it is in the mind, being an act of the mind" but this conception is not a circle and has no resemblance to one - "no two things can be more perfectly unlike, than a species of thought and a species of figure." I.

By all means say that when you conceive a centaur or a circle, you have its image in your mind - so long as you remember that to have an image of a centaur or of a circle in the mind, is just to conceive a centaur or a circle. If you insist that No, by 'having an image' of one or other of these you do not mean merely that you conceive it; you mean that to conceive it is to have its image as the object of the conception, then, up to a point, Reid could understand you. He knows what it is to think of an image of a centaur or of a circle. Imagining a drawing of a centaur or the diagram of a circle would be the sort of thing that should be meant. What Reid does not understand is your implication that things and their representations are identical. Thinking of the image of a centaur or of a circle is quite different from thinking of the things themselves - nothing can be its own image. If you again correct him, and say that the image is not on paper but in the mind (especially if you add that the act of conception and its object are identical), then, again, it is the centaur and the circle and not their representations that are being thought of, and nothing in the mind is half man and half horse, nothing circular, nothing in it is remotely like a centaur or a circle.

I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.374.

Both the centaur and the circle are ruled out of existence for Reid because both are universals. Though on Reid's view of the nature of universals it will turn out to be as misleading to say that universals do not exist as to say that they do.) The centaur, however, is clearly picked out for consideration because anyone would accept it as an example of a non-existent object. Only a philosopher would ask whether it was or was not non-existent because it was a universal. The circle is selected as a typical universal and denied existence on that account; whiteness would have done instead.

The fact that the Euclidean circle, from the definition of the line describing its circumference, has no real existence is not directly under discussion here. But the discussion applies to it, as to everything else that is thought and does not exist.

What does Reid mean when he says that a centaur is the direct object of the the conception of a centaur and that there are no centaurs? One would like to be quite sure that Reid himself knew even vaguely. He goes on as if what he had said was perfectly straight forward, as though there was nothing in it that looked self-contradictory and needed to be explained away. The meaning he might have had has to be worked out from obscure and conflicting materials.

Is Reid providing non-existent objects of conception with a twilight 'subsistence' somewhere between being and nonentity? It is not what you would expect, with his down to earth mind, yet a touch would bring the more probable of two interpretations of what he says (or the stronger of two inconsistent views that he held)very close to it.

We shall begin with the less probable interpretation (or the weaker view). "...my conception of felony is true and just, when it agrees with the meaning of that word in the laws relating to it, and in authors who understood the law. The meaning of the word is the thing conceived; and that meaning is the

conception affixed to it by those who best understood the language."[1.]

I understand what felony is when the meaning I have for the word is the meaning it has in the law and in legal usage. And the meaning it has there, Reid says unmistakably, is "the thing conceived", that is the meaning of 'felony' is felony.[2.] Since there is nothing that the word 'centaur' applies to, the meaning of the word 'centaur', at any rate, cannot be what the word applies to. We may notice incidentally that this identification of the meaning of a word with what it applies to is a crude expression of Reid's view, which on other occasions shows itself more subtly, that the word is directly related to the world; that there is no psychological entity, its 'meaning', floating in between He eliminates the ideas signified by words and in turn signifying things, though there is no formal announcement that ideas in yet another of their mediatorial capacities have gone.[3.] There is no direct polemic in Reid against the Lockian theory of signification and and no comment on its parallel with the Lockian theory of perception.

Now Reid is quite well aware that a word may have no application and still have meaning. And it is perhaps not reading too much into the 'felony' passage to find in it vaguely the view that to conceive X (where X is not an individual) is to understand how the word 'X' is used by those who understand the language thoroughly, the denotative use, where there is one, being part of the total use.[4.] (Where Reid identifies meaning with the 'thing

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I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.I, p.364.

2. Cp. "To conceive the meaning of a general word, and to conceive what it signifies, is the same thing." He adds that what is signified is "what is common to many individuals". (Intellectual Powers, V, Ch.II, p.393.)

3. In the Philosophical Orations there is a brief hostile reference, to the philosophers who hold "Verba esse non rerum sed Idearum signa". (p.32.)

4. Professor Woozley drew my attention to something like this as a possible interpretation of Reid.

conceived' he is being doubly careless.) This fits in with scattered hints elsewhere; for example:"The meaning of other general words other than those of which we are given definitions we collect, by a kind of induction, from the way in which we see them used on various occasions by those who understand the language".[I.] On one interpretation of Reid then, to think of things that do not exist is to know the meaning of the words that stand for them, and to know the meaning of these words is to know how they are used, and this includes knowing that there is nothing they apply to. What becomes of the principle which Reid regards as axiomatic, the principle that every act of conception must have an object?

When we are thinking of what does not exist, there is necessarily no object which is the non-existent thing we are thinking of. And if the principle will not be satisfied with something else instead, it has to be given up. All that can be done is to explain the feeling that there must be what there cannot be. The demand for an object when something unreal is thought of is the shadow of the necessity for an object when something real is thought of, The linguistic forms 'thought of a ....' etc., appropriate in the one case, persist inappropriately in the other. The demand cannot be satisfied and no analysis of the notion of imaginary being or ens rationis can take away all the uneasiness that results from frustration.

It might be said that the mind does have objects when we think of non-existent things, though not the impossible objects of the demand. It is, to widen slightly the application of a remark of Stewart's[2.], words with which our attention is then occupied. The plain man believes that he can think of what does not exist and he has a plain way of expressing his disbelief in something alleged to exist; he calls it mere words.

I. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch. VI, p.409.
2. Elements, Vol.I, Ch.IV, Sec. III, p. 188.

The questions, however, which Reid had for the ideal objects, proposed as substitutes for non-existent real objects, are waiting for these word-objects- is the word 'centaur' half horse and half man? And the plain man can express his disbelief in something by calling it a mere idea. The only commitment common sense has in the matter is that we can think of what does not exist.

Reid's other explanation of what it is to think of objects that do not exist (or the other interpretation of his one explanation) is an inference from his views on the nature of generality in things. Reid's view of the nature of generality in things may be summed up by saying that he regards the attributes of a thing as numerically different in each individual but capable of qualitative identity in any number of individuals. Even if it was an empirical fact that no attribute in any one thing is exactly the same as any attribute in another thing, the capacity for repetition is a logical characteristic of an attribute, and in fact very often different individuals do have the same attributes. There are many men above six feet in height and many below it, many poor and many rich, many born in France and many in England; many things have many qualities in common. And if this is what the Schoolmen meant, Reid says, by universals a parte rei, then there are certainly such universals.

Then comes one of the places in which he talks obscurely of the non-existence of universals: "... the whiteness of this sheet is one thing, whiteness is another; the conceptions signified by these two forms of speech are as different as the expressions. The first signifies an individual quality really existing... the second signifies a general conception, which implies no existence, but may be predicated of everything that is white, and in the same sense. On this account, if one should say that the whiteness of this sheet is the whiteness of another sheet, every man perceives this to be absurd; but when

he says both sheets are white, this is true and perfectly understood. The conception of whiteness implies no existence; it would remain the same though everything in the universe that is white were annihilated."[1.]

There is another passage found a few pages further on which should be in front of us: "...universals have no real existence. When we ascribe existence to them, it is not an existence in time or place, but existence in some individual subject; and this existence means no more but that they are truly attributes of such a subject. Their existence is nothing but predicability, or the capacity of being attributed to a subject." (p.407)

A minor difficulty, and an important feature, in the first passage is the meaning of 'conception'. Reid has, however, warned us near the end of the previous chapter that 'conception' may be used for 'thing conceived' (thing, when the word has objective signification, not an idea or notion of a thing), and it is used in this way here. The stubborn difficulty is with the general whiteness which does not imply existence and would remain the same even though there was nothing white. Reid's language suggests that he thought there were ownerless abstractions, like the Platonic ideas, but non-existent. His remarks on the Platonic ideas tend to confirm this impression. If Plato had denied existence to his ideas, all would have been well; everything else that he says about them, about their eternity and their other characteristics, would have been "level to the human understanding".[2.]

The second passage provides something less unintelligible, in spite of the fact that Reid seems to change his mind in between sentences as to the sense in which universals can be said to exist. And the first passage can be interpreted consistently with it. There is no whiteness in general existing as a

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1. Intellectual Powers, V,Ch. III, p. 395.
2. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch. VI, p.404.

quality over and above the white colour of particular things. Whiteness as a universal is the fact that many things are or could be white. And similarly with other universals.

When, therefore, an X is conceived and there are no Xs, the object of the conception is the fact that there could be an X. (Or perhaps Reid would say the object of the conception is a possible X - not quite something, not quite nothing, but not just the fact that X is possible.) Against this view the Reidian questions still echo: Is the fact that there could be centaurs something which is half horse and half man? (Are possible centaurs hooved?) The problem exemplified by the geometer's circle is not solved. Leaving, however these considerations aside, the equation of the conception of X with the conception of the fact that X is possible (or with the conception of a possible X) runs into infinite regress.

Something should be said here about Reid's account of 'abstract general conceptions' in relation to Locke and Berkeley, whom he criticizes, and to Stewart who criticized him. It will emphasize still further Reid's (and Stewart's) rejection of concepts as psychical entities. Against Berkeley Reid insists that we do have 'abstract general conceptions'. Stewart complains that Reid is manufacturing mystery where everything is plain and straightforward. Everyone agrees that we can, for example, reason "concerning a figure considered merely as triangular" without attending to its particularities. What additional light does it throw on the subject to tell us in "scholastic language" that we are enabled to do so because of the power which the mind has for forming 'abstract general conceptions'? [1] Stewart, however, has no deep quarrel with Reid's views; the words 'abstract general conceptions' prevented him from seeing how shallow it was. [2]

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1. Elements, Vol.II, Ch. II, Sec. II, p.83.
2. Reid and Stewart are usually contrasted as 'conceptualist' and 'nominalist'. Part of Reid's attack on the theory of ideas is the denial that there are concepts with the status conceptualism has traditionally assigned to them.

The words are Locke's but Reid does not use them in Locke's sense; he argues with Berkeley without really disagreeing with him; and he does not make mistakes that Stewart corrects. For the problem which interested Locke, Berkeley and Stewart - how we can refer significantly to generality - is not directly Reid's interest. Of course we refer to generality by general words, with or without the assistance of representative members of a class. "Generalization", Reid says in a fragmentary draft of the Intellectual Powers,[1] " is nothing else in my apprehension than observing some attribute or circumstance to be common to two or more objects, and giving it an name which must of consequence be applicable to all the individuals in which the thing signified by it is found." What Reid is concerned with is the threat to the knowledge of real generality in things. He thinks this threat comes in different ways from Locke and Berkeley, and he is still preoccupied with the theory of ideas. Locke and Berkeley, he thinks, have got themselves into positions in which one of them can allow us knowledge only of general ideas (which Reid misconstrues in Locke to mean images),[2] with no emergence beyond them; and the other can allow us knowledge only of particular things (and Berkeley's 'things' Reid insists, unless they are minds, are ideas which have supplanted things.

The direct thought of a particular thing is a particular conception; of one of its attributes, separated from the rest, an abstract particular conception; of such an attribute as actually or potentially common to a number of individuals, an abstract general conception. Neither a particular, nor an abstract, nor an abstract general conception, is an idea in Locke's sense. To abstract is to consider separately what may or may not be able to exist

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1. Aberdeen MSS, 2131.6
2. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch. VI, p.408.

separately, and Berkeley in trying to deny it admits it. For he admits that in considering, for example, a triangle, he can consider it merely as such without attending to its differences from other triangles. And, says Reid, you cannot consider what you cannot conceive. So Berkeley does conceive a triangular figure merely as such. "I know no more that is meant by an abstract general conception of a triangle."[I] Locke meant more, and Berkeley did not mean less by the abstraction he allowed, and Reid, if he is to be held to the sense he put upon 'conception', meant what Berkeley did, since the proposition that nothing can be considered unless it is conceived, is, with 'conception' used as Reid used it, tautological.

Against Berkeley's view that the particular is given a functional universality by being made representative of a class, Reid objects that the use of a member of a class as its representative implies a conception of the defining properties of the class. It does, but it is open to Berkeley to reply that the class properties are in the first place determined by a decision to take into consideration some properties of a particular and to leave others out of consideration. The class properties are calculated from the degree of abstraction applied to the particular not the other way round. And there is no reason why Reid should regard this reply as unsatisfactory.

Stewart has a heavily linguistic view of the nature of general conception. Unfortunately no more than hints and fragments of it emerge from a hundred pages of exposition, divided between the first two volumes of the Elements. Language, or at any rate, a system of signs, is the indispensible instrument of abstraction and general reasoning, which cannot begin without primitive signs or cannot develop sucessfully without a "class of signs expressive of all the circumstances which we wish our reasonings to comprehend; and, at the same time, exclusive of all those which we wish to leave out of consideration. The word triangle, for

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I. Intellectual Powers, V, VI, p. 408.

instance, when used without any additional epithet, confines the attention to the three angles and three sides of the figure before us; and reminds us, as we proceed, that no step of our deduction is to turn on any of the specific varieties which that figure may exhibit."[I.] Reid's criticism of Berkeley, that a member of a class cannot be made its representative without an abstract conception of the characteristic properties of the class, is answered simply: a class is specified by a class name with its definition.[I.] It is not too much to say that "we think as well as speak by means of words".[I.] When particulars are at once generalized by general words, and the words in turn given meaning by being given things to stand for, general reasoning with a factual application bec becomes possible. With the representative particular kept in mind, it proceeds, as far as content though not form is concerned, like an operation in geometry; with the particular dropped from view, like an operation in algebra, the words in their manipulation no more having to call up immediately the thought of things than algebraical symbols do. The difference between the two procedures is like the difference between hieroglyphic writing and writing in alphabetical characters.[2.] Finally, whenever thought is general, signs are the object of its attention whether there is any thing existing to be thought of or not.

Reid has not told us what it is to imagine a thing that does not exist, as distinct from conceiving it intellectually, but he has, as we have seen, left some scattered materials for an answer. These might be put together and developed slightly. Imagination is one kind of conception, the conception of an individual sensible object. It is the ~~summing~~ summary up of the look of it, and though Reid does not think it good English to speak of imaginary sounds, tastes and so on, it is the ~~summing~~ summary up of sounds, tastes, smells - of any sensible quality or pattern of them. No conception, unless it is of an internal object, has an

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I. Elements, Vol.II, Ch. II, Sec. II, P. 85; P. 93; P. 98.
2. Elements, Vol.I. Ch.IV, SecII, p. I74.

internal object. No remoteness in space or time is a bar to the direct conception of an external object. There is the analogy between perception and imagination emphasized by philosophers and reflected in everyday language in metaphorical uses of 'see', 'hear', 'touch' etc.; only the point of the analogy is not that both perception and imagination have inward objects but that neither does.(Reid does not believe that when people say imaginary objects are "in the mind", they want somehow to localize them there, with some sort of analogy to the way in which things are physically in things.) When you imagine something that once happened to be, happening now, that thing with its real characters, and not any 'idea' of it is the object of your imagination. When you imagine unreal things, real characters of real things are still before the mind, but formed into unreal combinations; a centaur pictured is an unreal combination of real components. The objects of imaginative conception are limited, as the objects of intellectual conception are not, to what has been experienced or to rearrangements of what has been experienced.

This treatment of the objects of imagination, for what it is worth, could be extended to the objects of false memories. Having once realized that there is no place for ideas as direct objects in remembering, one is inclined to say that what they are wanted for is pseudo-remembering; that indeed the difference between the two is constituted by the fact that the first does not have, and the second does have, ideas for objects. To say this, is to create the problem: how can present ideas be mistaken for past events when they have not a single property in common? Finding it insoluble, ideas are reinstated for both true and false memory.

There is no need to have ideas as the objects of false memories. When you remember what actually happened, you are retrospectively aware of persons, things, events, times and places, as they actually were. When you are sure

you remember and do not, you are still retrospectively aware of persons, things, events, times and places, but one person is confused with another, things and events are mistaken for other things and events, or the times are wrong, or places muddled; some features of the past are not recognized for what they were. When you positively remember returning to the library the book afterwards found slipped down behind the shelves, you do recall the book and you do recall returning books to the library and you think you did with this book what you did with otherbbooks. You do not, with all the sceptical implications in doing so, mistake the idea (in the theory sense) of returning the book for returning the book. You may 'have an idea' (in the sense that Reid would allow) that you did what you never did, but this is to fail to recognize some feature of the past for what it was, not to mistake the present for the past.

CHAPTER II THE SCEPTICAL DEDUCTION

I. The Logical Deduction

"Ideas seem to have something in their nature unfriendly to other existences." They begin their career humbly as representatives of things, and in this capacity appear to do the very useful work of making the operations of the mind intelligible, and they end by pushing everything out of existence except themselves.[I.] There is a short logical deduction of the sceptical consequences of the theory of ideas and there is the historical deduction of Hume from Locke. The short deduction:

"When I think of Alexander, I am told that there is an image or idea of Alexander in my mind, which is the immediate object of this thought. The necessary consequence of this seems to be, that there are two objects of this thought - the idea, which is in the mind, and the person represented by that idea; the first, the immediate object of the thought, the last, the object of the samethought, but not the immediate object. This is a hard saying; for it makes every thought of things external to have a double object. Every man is conscious of his thoughts, and yet, upon attentive reflection, he perceives no such duplicity in the object he thinks about. Sometimes men see objects double, but they always know when they do so: and I know of no philosopher who has expressly owned this duplicity in the object of thought, though it follows necessarily from maintaining that, in the same thought, there is one object that is immediate and in the mind itself, and another object which is not immediate, and which is not in the mind.

I. Inquiry, Ch.II, Sec. VI,p.109.

"Besides this, it seems very hard, or rather impossible, to understand what is meant by an object of thought that is not an immediate object of thought....There is a sense in which a thing may be said to be perceived by a medium. Thus any kind of sign may be said to be the medium by which I perceive or understand the thing signified. The sign by custom, or compact, or perhaps by nature, introduces the thought of the thing signified. But here the thing signified, when it is introduced to the thought, is an object of thought no less immediate than the sign was before. And there are here two objects of thought, one succeeding another, which we have shown not to be the case with respect to an idea, and the object it represents.

"I apprehend, therefore, that, if philosophers will maintain that ideas in the mind are the only immediate objects of thought, they will be forced to grant that they are the sole objects of thought, and that it is impossible for men to think of anything else."[I.]

Are there two objects before the mind when, say, Alexander is thought of; one of them the historical person and the other the idea of him? If there are, this could hardly fail to be noticed. Ideas especially should be obvious since they are immediately known, and are what they appear to be, and anything else that is known is known only through them.

Yet in spite of these characteristics, unanimously accorded to ideas by philosophers, there must be something unstraightforward about them, Reid thinks, to account for the fact that the history of philosophy is almost the history of an argument over the nature of ideas. Ideas have been held to be self-existent, in the Divine Mind, in our minds, in our brains; to be all innate, all adventitious, some innate and some adventitious; when adventitious, to have God, external things, impressions, as their causes; abstract ideas have been held to exist, abstract ideas have been denied as an absurdity. We must

I. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. IX, pp. 278-279.

be better acquainted with ideas than with anything else, if there are ideas, and yet there has been all this disagreement and more about their nature.[1]

Quite different sorts of things are of course called 'ideas' in this chaos of philosophical disputes, and even when any one of them is separated out from the others, the powers of inspection would need to be very formidable to settle, as Reid seems to think they should be able to, all the questions that might arise about it. It might well be beyond them even to detect the ideas that are objects of cognition, for though in a way they must be more obvious than anything else, they may not be obviously ideas. Certainly the descriptions of ideas that we have to go on do not point unmistakably to their application: 'immediate objects', 'lasting no longer than the consciousness of them', 'located in the mind' - least of all 'immediate objects'. When Locke said that he meant by ideas whatsoever was "the object of the understanding when a man thinks", and that he supposed it would be granted him that there are such ideas,[2] the supposition was too well founded; the trouble is that everyone would grant it. And there is no way of supplementing these metaphysical descriptions with a list of typical examples of ideas of thought or memory. Could we be helped obliquely to a recognition of them? The objects of all false beliefs are ideas; we know what false beliefs are, so we know in a general way what ideas are. This is no help. Even if we knew that the objects of false beliefs are ideas, we would not be in any better position to recognize the ideas involved as direct objects in true beliefs.

A list of typical examples of ideas of sense does not sound straightaway an impossible ~~complication~~ compilation. We would know what to look for when told to look for patches of colour and so on. But when Locke says that these are ideas, meaning by 'ideas' all that he does mean, the trouble is that many people would

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XIV, p.305.
2. Essay, Introduction (Fraser's edition) Vol.I, pp. 32- 33.

not allow that they are ideas.

However, when looking for the ideas of thought, we do have this to go on: we do know that there are to be two objects of thought, respectively immediate and remote, whenever we think of what is not itself in the mind; and the immediate object is the idea and it is in the mind and to be looked for there. So if two objects are not to be found, then either ideas are fictitious or it is false that we can think (except, perhaps, introspectively where "the mind is its own archetype") of anything else.

Are there then, two objects? We are thinking of events in Alexander's life, and very likely while we are , there is a flickering succession of images (which might be quite different the next time we thought of the same events). Are these the ideal objects representing remote and directly inaccessible objects that the theory is speaking of? If so, it is a psychological banality not worth powder and shot. For we are certainly thinking directly, in a perfectly clear sense of the word, of the past events, and what argument there is would be over the propriety of calling the images to which no attention is being paid, objects of thought at all, let alone direct objects. If it is two different sorts of objects before the mind at the same time that we are to find, with a significant epistemological relation between them, the search has been disappointing. Should we have looked for successive objects?

There are the familiar experiences in which we come to think of one thing by first thinking of another, as in any chain of reasoning or in any causal inference; as in memory we sometimes grope back from clue to clue towards an accurate recollection; as in the transition from any sign to its signification. The mediation is temporary and has failed unless it is. It ends in our thinking directly of the later thing to which the earlier has led us There is no analogy here with the structure of cognition in the theory of ideas where the indirect object never becomes the direct object. This structure, Reid claims

is unintelligible through and through. "For, whatever the object be, the man either thinks of it, or he does not. There is no medium between these. If he thinks of it, it is an immediate object of thought while he thinks of it. If he does not think of it, it is no object of thought at all. Every object of thought, therefore, is an immediate object of thought, and the word immediate, joined to objects of thought, seems to be a mere expletive." [1]

It is not surprising that Reid finds himself wondering for a moment if the theory of the two objects has been a theory which anyone has ever tried to hold. He cannot remember any philosopher actually saying that there are the two. But add together 'immediate' and 'mediate' and you have two, and 'immediate' implies its correlative even if this is not expressly mentioned. And what has Locke, for instance, been trying to say in saying "the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas we have of them", [2] if not what Reid shows cannot be said? That there are not two objects discoverable on inspection, but only the idea with, however, its representative, symbolical, relative function? Reid is not answered. Either we know what is represented, symbolized, or we do not. If we do, then there are the two objects. If we do not, the idea is absolute and has no representative, symbolical function. Unless we can get beyond ideas to what they are ideas of, we are in the position of a savage shown a book in a language he cannot read and does not even know to be a language. [3]

Reid's criticism of a representative theory of cognition reaches down to a deeper self-destruction in it than the inconsistency brought out by the standard criticism. The standard criticism is that Y cannot be representative of X unless, contrary to the hypothesis, X and Y can be compared. Without

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. III, p.427.
2. Essay, Bk. IV, Ch. IV, Sec. 3, Vol II, p.228.
3. Philosophical Orations, p.35.

this comparison, we have nothing but groundless belief; we do not know whether Y represents X; we do not know whether there is an X to be represented. Or if we may be permitted to know that there is by a non-empirical causal inference, it remains blankly X for us.

Reid's criticism is that a general theory of mediate cognition implies the necessity of what it asserts to be impossible. If X cannot be thought of directly, it cannot be thought of indirectly through the idea of it. For to think of Y as the idea of X is to think of X directly, Y directly, and directly of the relation between X and Y. (The alternative: an infinity of mediating ideas between X and Y.) Ideas overcome no barriers. If the barrier is the thing's remoteness, ideas leave it remote; if it is that the conditions of thought impose phenomenal distortion, then ideas either are this distortion, or they are involved in it. Therefore, either it is impossible to know X, or it is necessary to know it immediately. To say that nothing but ideas can be immediately known is already to have given up the theory of mediate cognition, for it is to say that nothing but ideas can be known - "immediately" here is a mere expletive. One way or the other the unintelligible duality of cognitive objects has to be given up. If the ideas are cut out, we are back at common sense. If the alternative excision is made, Hume is inevitable.

A theory of representative sense perception by itself, detached from a general theory of representative cognition, is free from self-contradiction. A thing able to be thought of directly could possibly be perceived only indirectly. The statement that the senses never show us the thing itself, nor any of its properties in themselves, nothing but its fugitive and ideal appearances, is a statement that can be understood. Require all cognition: thinking, remembering, imagining and perceiving to be indirect in the way the theory means, and none can be.

Of course, as the standard criticism points out, the content of our thought

of the object lying behind its ideal manifestations in sense experience is going to be qiute arbitrary; we shall not have any reasons for supposing that there is any hidden object there at all, let alone for a claim to know what it is like. The supposition and claim, however, are not formally invalid, though the fact that we have no reason for them is a good reason for their sceptical rejection, for striking out here too 'immediate' from the proposition that ideas are the mind's only immediate objects.

The sceptical deduction from the principle of mediate cognition is reinforced by the implications of the principle of conceptual empiricism. They are independent principles which the history of British philosophy had tightly connected. The theory of ideas for Reid included both as components, and he is liable without warning to mean by 'the theory of ideas' either of them. He always regards the principle that we have no concepts going beyond sense or introspective experience as a "necessary and allowed consequence" of the principle that things are known only through their 'images' in the mind.[1.] He says nothing that would enable us to see why he thought it was a necessary consequence.

" There is a tribunal of inquisition erected by certain modern philosophers, before which everything in nature must answer. The articles of inquisition are few indeed, but very dreadful in their consequences. They are only these: Is the prisoner an Impression or an Idea? If an idea, from what impression copied? Now, if it appears that the prisoner is neither an impression, nor an idea copied from some impression, immediately, without being allowed to offer anything in arrest of judgment, he is sentenced to pass out of existence,and to be, in all time to come, an empty unmeaning sound, or the ghost of a departed entity."[2.]

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1. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec.VI,p.I40.
2. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec.VIII,p.I44.

If the only possible objects of thought are possible objects of sense or introspective experience, and if the objects of sense experience are ideas (counting 'impressions' as 'ideas'), then the world becomes at once exclusively my world, its history part of my autobiography, and I become what is introspectively discoverable in me.

This picture of the consequences of the two principles has exaggerated features. (Reid would insist that in one respect it is not strong enough: it should have blacked out any sort of history at all, since the intervention of ideas shuts off memory and thought from the past.) It has room for no more than one experient, who is himself reduced to a succession of experiences somehow linked together as his by a pervasively personal quality in all of them. But there could be other private worlds for other minds. It is true that no one's mind can be an object of experience to someone else. The principle of conceptual empiricism, however, was not quite the modern verification principle. It allowed significance to syntactically correct statements if their descriptive language had possible application to the same sort of things as one's own sense and introspective data, even though these things could never become part of one's own sense and introspective data. The question How do we know that there are other minds? remains, but the question How do we know? is an embarrassment for any philosophy except one which claims to know less than we do know.

And the queerness of as many sensible worlds as there are sentient beings, a world a piece, surrounding each one with a visible and tangible aura, but visible and tangible only to each one, is already there before the deduction, as part of the queerness of a physical world unreachably beyond its different ideal appearances to different individuals. For these appearances constitute as many different sensible worlds as there are individuals; never left by them as long as they

live and never entered by anybody else. There are even linguistic palliatives available, now that there are no longer both these multitudes of private worlds and a single physical world neither private nor public. A material object might be defined as a class made up out of its sense appearances to different individuals. It would thus be given a sort of independence of any one individual, and the perception of any member of the class could permissibly be called a perception of the object. (People who see different bits of a thing rightly say they see the same thing.) How far this verbal gesture of reconciliation would do would depend on how stubborn the common sense was that had to be appeased. At any rate, on a metaphysics where appearance and reality coincide, as they do after the deduction, the words 'see', 'touch', 'hear' etc. could be used with unforced meanings. We no longer have to choose between saying, on the one hand, that we see and touch what is invisible and intangible, and, on the other, that we do not see and touch material objects.

Finally, numerical self-identity has gone but a qualitative self-identity remains, and anyone making the change would probably deny that common sense was committed to the first, and so deny that there is anything sceptical in the substitution of the second for it.

Reid sees the principle of conceptual empiricism for what it is; he sees the a priori behind the empirical front.[2] You got the idea of scarlet by having that colour shown to you; of anger by feeling angry; the idea of a centaur by

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I. There are all the things in the "universe of objects or of body". And there is "another sun, moon, and stars; an earth, and seas, cover'd and inhabited by plants and animals; towns, houses, mountains, rivers" in the universe of "my impressions and ideas". (Hume, Treatise Bk. I. Pt.IV, Sec.V, p.242.) It is one of Hume's merits to have shown how astonishing the view was which most of his educated contemporaries had accepted effortlessly from Locke and the scientists.

2. Active Powers, IV, Ch. II, p.604.

mentally joining half a man and half a horse; you have never tasted pineapples, so you have no idea of the taste of a pineapple. It is a safe proposition that every idea you have has had a similar origin. Too safe; quite invulnerable, for nothing will be allowed to count against it. [1] The fact that an alleged concept has no empirical derivation is a complete reason for regarding it as a pseudo-concept. "And when he suspects that any philosophical term has no idea annexed to it (as is too common) he always asks from what impression that idea is derived? And if no impression can be produced, he concludes that the term is altogether insignificant." [2]

Hume does not quite do that, at least not when the terms are in philosophical and ordinary use. To write off such expressions as meaningless is to invite the reply: "It would be very strange indeed if mankind had always used these words so familiarly, without perceiving that they had no meaning and that this discovery should have been first made by a philosopher of the present age." [3] What Hume does maintain, when he is careful, is that if a philosopher borrows a term from common speech and does not annex to it an idea with the prescribed origin, he uses it without its common meaning, without, indeed, any meaning. '' And since whenever Reid would call something a material object, Hume would also; since both could agree on the criteria for applying the expessions 'personal identity', 'cause and effect', 'free will', 'right and wrong' and so on, Reid cannot prove that Hume means more by them than he admits, and Hume cannot prove that Reid means less by them than he claims, and neither can he prove that he has the rest of mankind with him against the other.

I. As an empirical generalization, Hume does allow it a minor exception (the shade of blue never seen but imaginable); but none to it as an a priori criterion of meaning.

2. Hume, Abstract, p.II.

3. Active Powers, I, Ch.I, p.5I5. It is the word 'power' that Reid has particularly in mind, and the other words that are logically related to it.

2. The Historical Deduction

As everyone with a sufficiently brief acquaintance with the history of British philosophy knows, its development from Locke to Hume is straightforward and can be illustrated by a simple diagram. Three concentric circles would represent Locke's position, the outer one standing for material objects, the middle one for ideas and the inner one for the self. Berkeley deleted the first of these circles; Hume deleted the first and the third, leaving nothing but ideas. Very crudely, this is the Common Sense school's derivation of Hume from Locke. Two successive sceptical revisions of Locke, the first surrendering the independence of the external world with the intention of countering his implicit scepticism, the second with the intention of making what was implicit fully actual; Berkeley and Hume respectively; Berkeley, Locke made more self-consistent; Hume, Locke made quite self-consistent. The influence of Reid, Beattie and Stewart fixed this as the outline of the standard version of the progress of philosophy from the Essay on Human Understanding to the Treatise of Human Nature. (They were not responsible for the modification of it which derives Hume indirectly from Locke through Berkeley, which has Hume pruning Berkeley as Berkeley had pruned Locke.) It has kept its authority in spite of one or two ineffectual protests until quite recently.

The historically decisive Locke,[1] in the eyes of the Common Sense philosophers was Locke saying that, "the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas",[2] and at the same time not wanting to deny that we can know any of the things that we can ordinarily claim to know. The contradiction had to be ended in one of two ways. If the theory of ideas is true, "there can be no knowledge of anything but ideas. And, on the other hand,

1. For British philosophy. In France, Stewart says, it was Locke determinedly misunderstood as deriving all concepts from sensation. (Philosophical Essays, Pt. I., Essay III.) 2. Essay, Bk. IV, Ch. I.

if we have knowledge of anything besides ideas, that theory must be false."[1] Berkeley and Hume accepted the theory and went on, Berkeley half-way, Hume with a harder logic to its consequences.

Reid's Locke, however, is not Locke simply tailored to a deductive premiss; Locke keeps some of his ambiguities. Reid genuinely wonders whether his statements can mean what they seem to mean. In some contexts, 'idea' with Locke is a synonym for 'act of thought' or 'act of perception'; in others it is a deplorable word for the objective qualities of things. Does it, perhaps, however unlikely, have one or other of these meanings in all contexts, so that there is nothing wrong with Locke's theory of knowledge except the wording? It is not easy to be quite sure: "ideas, being supposed to be a shadowy kind of beings, intermediate between the thought and the object of thought, sometimes seem to coalesce with the thought, sometimes with the object of thought, and sometimes to have a distinct existence of their own."[2] When Locke says that "the mind, in allits thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas," can he really have intended to imply that there are objects of thought which are not immediate? How could he have helped seeing that to say 'immediate object' is necessarily to say 'only object'? And indeed, is not this exactly what he does say in the continuation of the same sentence - "no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate"? Then the definition of knowledge as "the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement, and repugnancy, of any of our ideas." Locke says this is what knowledge is, but he cannot mean it, because he is to be found asking and failing to answer the question how the mind, perceiving nothing but its own ideas, can know their correspondence with things. It is especially difficult to know how to take

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.III,p.433.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. IX, pp.279-280.

the persistent formula describing knowledge as a matter of perceived relationships between ideas. It at least, perhaps, puts forward no theory but only a new terminology. "I say a sensation exists, and I think I understand clearly what I mean. But you want to make the thing clearer, and for that end tell me, that there is an agreement between the idea of that sensation and the idea of existence. To speak freely, this conveys to me no light, but darkness; I can conceive no otherwise of it, than as an odd and obscure circumlocution."[1] If Locke had been thinking merely of the abstract knowledge we have in axioms and deduction, the formula would be intelligible and unobjectionable. Abstract knowledge is a matter of the perceived relations of ideas, provided that by 'ideas' are understood the attributes of things conceived without regard to their actual existence.[2] "But I cannot see how, in any sense, it can be applied to the evidence of consciousness, to the evidence of memory, or to that of the senses."[3]

These are all possible interpretations of parts of Locke, and some of them may be the most probable interpretations of some of his statements in some of their contexts. An interpretation of the Essay as a whole which did not find in it 'the theory of ideas' would be the interpretation of some other book.

It required no Samson, says Reid, to bring down the pillars on which Locke supported the external world. But Berkeley's motive was not a destroyer's; he was countering scepticism by a sceptical manoeuvre. Reid misunderstood Berkeley's intentions. He thought that Berkeley was abandoning the material world in order to secure the immaterial world. It was better to make a clean

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1. Inquiry, Ch. II, Sec. V, p.107.
2. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. III, P.429 ff.
3. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XX, p.330. The formula was of course invented with the entailments and exclusions of a deductive system in mind, and Locke virtually gives it up for the kinds of knowledge to which Reid cannot see that it can have any application.

sweep of what was doomed in any case and might involve more important things in its ruin. Matter could go without loss and with advantage. The grounds of of atheism and irreligion went with it (and, incidently, Berkeley must have calculated, the metaphysical foundations of transubstantiation).

Berkeley, however, was not concerned simply with protecting religion and the soul. Nothing, he would have claimed, has gone except the fiction of material substance; he was not surrendering the material world; he was beating back scepticism from it in the one way possible, by showing that our senses openon to it. Material things are precisely what we see, handle, hear, taste and smell. Berkeley did, J. F. Ferrier remarks, what Reid talked about doing: Berkeley showed that the material world is directly perceived. I.

"I am not for changing things into ideas, but rather ideas into things." Berkeley changes things into ideas both in name and in nature, the Common Sense philosophers say. He turns things into thought, Beattie insists, determined not to let huge absurdity escape. Ideas are thoughts, as everyone who knows the language knows, and if we allow Berkeley to persuade us to accept the transformation, we have to give up any claim to being able to distinguish anything from anything else.

"All external objects have some qualities in common; but between an external object and an idea, or thought of the mind, there is not, there cannot possibly be, any resemblance. A grain of sand, and the globe of the earth; a burning coal, and a lump of ice; a drop of ink, and a sheet of white paper, resemble each other, in being extended, solid, figured, coloured, and divisible; but a thought or idea hath no extension, solidity, figure, colour, nor divisibility: so that no two external objects can be so unlike, as an external object and (what philosophers call) the idea of it. Now we are taught by BERKELEY, that

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I. Works, Vol. III, p.417.

external objects (that is, the things we take for external objects) are nothing but ideas in our minds; in other words, that they are in every respect different from what they appear to be ... The candle may be a lump of ice, an Egyptian pyramid, a mad dog, or nothing at all ... for anything I know, or can ever know to the contrary, except you allow me to judge of its nature from its appearance; which, however, I cannot reasonably do, if its appearance and nature are in every respect so different and unlike as not to have one single quality in common."[1]

Part of the price a philosopher has to pay for saying that stones, trees and books are collections of ideas is to have a Beattie gyrate round the word, grin at the absurdities and be utterly incapable of seeing that it is essential to his theory to have no implications for experience. So Beattie thought that if Berkeley was right we ought to be able to stride over precipices with impunity ("my neck, Sir, may be an idea to you, but to me it is a reality"); that to stand on the ground is to perform the astonishing feat of getting the ideas in our heads under our boots, and so on. Nothing of this, of course, is a consequence of Berkeley's theory: death comes in the accustomed ways, no psycho-physical acrobatics are involved in standing up, the tissue-paper flimsiness to which the solid earth and everything on it is attenuated by becoming clusters of 'ideas' is an illusion which the word casts on the imagination; nothing in ordinary experience is changed. What would the world be like if things were clusters of ideas? Just like it is.

For Reid, Berkeley's metaphysics is not the gross affront to common sense that Beattie makes it out to be.[2] Nevertheless common sense rejects it decisively.

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1. Immutable Truth, Pt. II, Ch. II, Sec. II, pp. 284-285. Beattie wonders if, perhaps, he has misunderstood Berkeley. It is more than possible; after all Berkeley did not really understand himself or he would have seen that "his system leads directly to atheism and universal scepticism." (pp.286-287.)

2. Of the other Common Sense philosophers, Stewart thought that no one could be an idealist in practice.(Philosophical Essays.) Oswald is definite: everything he saw and touched refuted Berkeley who maintained that the system "of matter we inhabit is a mere nonentity". Appeal to Common Sense, Vol.I, p.94.

If things are collections of ideas, nothing that I perceive exists any longer than I perceive it, and nothing that I perceive can be perceived by anyone else. The plain man never doubts that what he perceives exists independently of his perception of it and that many people can perceive the very same thing. Berkeley claims to be on the side of common sense here also. He allows that material things exist independently of the mind of any one of us, denying them only "an absolute existence distinct from their being perceived by God and external to all minds."[1] Reid lets it go at that and does not use the weapon he has in his hands.

Berkeley's theory, Reid maintains, would make us entirely sceptical about the existence of other finite minds than our own. Why? Because it disembodies every person, except oneself, and so cuts off mind from mind. "What I call a father, a brother, or a friend is only a parcel of ideas in my own mind; and, being ideas in my mind, they cannot possibly have that relation to another mind which they have to mine, any more than the pain felt by me can be the individual pain felt by another."[2] Do I see other people's minds? "No. Do I see their ideas? No. Nor do they see me or my ideas."[3]

However Berkeley chose to meet Reid's difficulty about other people's bodies and our knowledge of their minds - perhaps the analogical argument is as unaffected by the privacy of ideas as Berkeley thinks it is[4] - Reid could have argued with some success that Berkeley had two alternatives before him with regard to the status of ideas. One of them will alienate him from common sense, and the other destroy the foundation of his idealism. Either ideas are related to perception, as pain to feeling, or they are not. If they are, then undoubtedly they must be perceived in order to exist. But then my ideas are as fleeting as my perceptions of them, and (theological difficulties apart) I could have no access to God's ideas,

1. "Three Dialogues" I, Works, Vol. II, p.235.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. X, p.285.
3. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, P.446.
4. "Principles", Works, Vol. II, P. 107.

which would be as private as my own. Nothing that I see or touch was there before I saw or touched it, nor will be afterwards. No two people see and touch the same thing, except in the sense of 'same' in which they can both have the same headache. (Reid quotes, surprisingly without comment, the passage in which Berkeley shifts the word 'same' when it means 'individually the same' out of ordinary speech into the theoretical vocabulary of philosophers.)[1]

If, on the other hand, individual ownership is made accidental to the nature of ideas (the possessive pronoun wedged off the word) ideas may then be public objects,[2] but they are loosed from their dependence on perception. To be is to be perceived by someone or other but not necessarily by anyone in particular, is not a proposition shining with the light of its intrinsic self-evidence.

In a further recession from common sense Berkeley, Reid says, seems to make ideas of sensation and of imagination differ in nothing but degree: ideas of imagination are "less regular, vivid and constant" than ideas of sensation. On "this doctrine, if we compare the state of a man racked with the gout, with his state when, being at perfect ease, he relates what he has suffered, the difference of the two states is only this - that, in the last, the pain is less regular, vivid and constant, than in the first. We cannot possibly assent to this. Every man knows that he can relate the pain he suffered, not only without pain, but with pleasure; and that to suffer pain, and to think of it, are things which totally differ in kind, and not in degree only."[3]

It is a pity, Reid says, that Berkeley who is always opposing common sense to philosophical paradox, should have taken over, without suspicion, the philosophers' principle upon which his own paradoxes are founded. But there it is at the beginning of the Principles of Human Knowledge: "It is evident to anyone who takes a

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1. Berkeley, "Three Dialogues", III, Works, Vol.II, p.247; Reid, Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.X, pp.284-285.
2. "Berkeley's position is that there is only one corporeal realm, which God and we alike apprehend directly ..." (T. E. Jessop, Berkeley's Works, Vol.II, p.268.)
3. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XI, p.291.

survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses ...."

Reid did not see that this statement for all its Lockian ring is already Berkeleyan, and not a premiss provided by Locke for his own refutation. Berkeley did not reach his idealism by taking a razor to Locke's representationalism. His idealism was axiomatic, could be read off from the meaning of 'existence' as predicted of sensible objects, which again (especially when called 'ideas' or 'sensations') show their dependence on mind. And he does not move against Locke by arguing that there is no room for 'immediate' in the proposition that ideas are the only immediate objects of knowledge. He eliminates Locke by a number of good and bad arguments: Locke's independent physical world is inconceivable - what would it be like? It is inconceivable - the attempt to conceive it would fail by succeeding.[I.] These arguments, and others which Berkeley uses, do not turn on the implications of the principle of mediate cognition.

As a description of the results of the transition from Locke to Berkeley, Reid's account is near the truth: Berkeley dropped the hidden independent physical world; he changed ideas into things only by calling them things from time to time; his real world has all the characteristics of Locke's ideal world; it has to be as private and fugitive if there is to be any reason for the dependence of *esse* on *percipi*. And Locke's ideal world has all the characteristics of Berkeley's real world, is as palpable, as full of colour and sounds and scents. Reid's deduction, however, of Berkeley from Locke is unhistorical.

How does Berkeley, beginning with Locke, as Reid supposes, avoid ending with

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I. "Philonous. How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen?

Hylas. No, that were a contradiction.

Philonous. Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of *conceiving* a thing which is *unconceived?*"

("Three Dialogues," *Works* Vol. II, p.200.) Ferrier paraphrased Berkeley: We want matter *per se*; we get matter in relation to mind. "We may ring for No.I, but No. 2 always answers the bell." (*Works*, Vol.III, p.44I.) Reid, he says, must be mistaken in confronting Berkeley with a common sense belief in independent matter; common sense does not believe logical impossibilities.

Hume? He inconsistently departs from "the common opinion about ideas" and allows that there are some things, notably our own minds, other finite minds, and God, of which we have no ideas but of which we do have notions. By 'notion', Berkeley meant, as far as Reid can see, what the word does mean. (He saw so little into Berkeley's meaning that he cannot make out the difference Berkeley supposed there to be between notions and 'idea of imagination'.) "A notion is an act of the mind conceiving or thinking of some object." The object may be in or outside the mind. And "if consciousness and reflection furnish us with notions of spirit and of their attributes, without ideas, may not our senses furnish us with notions of bodies and their attributes without ideas"? [1]

Hume corrected Berkeley's deviation. Locke taught us that "all the immediate objects of human knowledge are ideas in the mind. Bishop Berkeley, proceeding upon this foundation, demonstrated, very easily, that there is no material world. ... while he gives up the material world in favour of the system of ideas, he gives up one-half of that system in favour of the world of spirits; and maintains that we can, without ideas, think and speak, and reason intelligibly about spirits and what belongs to them.

"Mr Hume shows no such partiality in favour of the world of spirits. He adopts the theory of ideas in its full extent; and in consequence, shows that there is neither matter nor mind in the universe; nothing but impressions and ideas. What we call a body, is only a bundle of sensations; and what we call the mind is only a bundle of thoughts, passions, and emotions, without any subject." [2]

Reid, popularized by Beattie, imposed a caricature on the history of philosophy, Professor Kemp Smith maintains, in representing Hume's teaching as "sheerly negative, being in effect little more than a reductio ad absurdum of the principles which Hume's predecessors, and Hume himself, have followed in their enquiries. Hume, in other words, is depicted as having done no more than

1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XI, p.288.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XII, p.293.

deliver his successors from a bondage to which he himself remained subject. A strangely paradoxical verdict! Hume, whose genius is analytic and critical, and whose criticism is eulogised as being so clear-sighted and thorough-going, is declared to have been unable to perceive what was already so patent to Reid and even to Beattie, that the source of the trouble lay in his unconsidered acceptance of the hypothesis commonly entitled the 'theory of ideas'. Hume, who was sceptical - so it was alleged - about almost everything else, has yet been so uncritical as to erect the elaborate body of argument that constitutes the Treatise on a foundation which he has not been concerned to examine, and to the unreliability of which he has himself, though all unconsciously, been a chief witness!"[1]

Reid and Beattie do not make any special point of saying that Hume took over the hypothesis without examination. (In fact the one argument for it, not of an 'analogical' type, examined by Reid is Hume's argument from perceptual relativity,[2] Reid and Beattie say that Hume took over the hypothesis. It is what Hume says himself, in a letter to Reid after having been shown most of the Inquiry before its publication.

Hume begins the letter by telling Reid that he has gone through his work "with great pleasure and attention. It is certainly very rare that a piece so deeply philosophical is wrote with so much spirit, and affords so much entertainment to the reader." There seemed to be some obscurities in it, but these, Hume thought, might have disappeared if he could have had the whole of it in front of him at once. There were some objections he would have liked to make to the chapter "Of Sight", if he had not suspected that he had insufficiently understood it. He would not go into any further difficulties until he had seen the whole book. "I shall only say that if you have been able to clear up these abstruse and

1. The Philosophy of David Hume, pp.3-4.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XIV, pp.302ff.

important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise; and shall think that my errors by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility."[1]

It is not as 'candid and liberal' a letter as Stewart supposed when he inserted it into his Life of Reid, to give credit where credit was due, but a kinder letter than Kemp Smith supposes, and not as ironical. It is ironical - Hume was not recanting - but not so ironical as to mean that Hume had not adopted the 'common principles'. He could not have denied, and would not have wished to, that in the Treatise impressions and ideas are the components of experience.

Reid and Beattie say that Hume pushed Locke's theory of ideas to its sceptical conclusion. Kemp Smith agrees (p.II). What looks like Locke's principle is to be found in the Treatise in its sceptical potentiality, and with a reference which Reid might have written in himself to its universal sanction by philosophers: "'tis universally allow'd by philosophers, and is besides pretty obvious of itself, that nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions ...."[2] The sceptical deduction is not made with the simple logic that Reid favoured from the theory of ideas as a theory of mediate cognition. 'Perceptions' occupy existence exclusively only after Hume has added the principle of conceptual limitation, though it is true that this principle is implicit in Locke and is part of what Reid meant by Locke's theory of ideas.

In Books II and III of the Treatise Hume develops his psychological and moral theory on the assumption of a permanent physical world perceived indirectly through the impressions it makes on the mind. (Here and there the same assumption emerges in the first book, islands left from a drowned continent.) On the traditional interpretation of Hume this is put down to inconsistency. On Kemp

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1. Reid's Collected Works, pp. 7-8
2. Bk. I, Pt. II, SectionVI, p.67.

Smith's important reinterpretation it is no inconsistency: To stop at the impressions and ideas is to stop with the sceptical half of Hume (somewhat as if one took for the Cartesian philosophy only what goes before the Cogito, ergo sum); Hume has pushed the sceptical implications of Locke's theory hard in order to show its inadequacy; he was unperturbed by Reid's criticism that it wrecks our common sense beliefs, because he had himself already shown that by itself it does so, but that supplemented it leaves them intact; it needed to be limited and could not be abolished; not Locke and Berkeley's "view of sense", but "their view of the function of reason", their demand for reasons for any belief that we are entitled to hold, had to be rejected; feeling has a cognitive primacy over reason; Hume's scepticism is provisional; it is where reason alone would leave us, but where reason leaves us, nature takes over imperatively.[I.]

There are two questions here, in one of which Reid would be very interested, and in the other only faintly. The first is whether the theory of ideas can be combined with anything else so as to have its sceptical implications cancelled. And the answer depends on how much content is put into the theory. If the theory is a general theory of mediate cognition, channelling all thought of what is not in the mind through ideal objects that are in the mind, Reid would claim that the answer is No, and that he had shown that the theory is logically incoherent, and that if the ideal objects are to be retained they must be retained as the only objects there are . If the theory is taken more moderately to be a representative theory of sense perception, there is no logical impossibility in our managing to possess true beliefs for which we can produce no evidence, and this belief, which we cannot shake off, in a permanent world behind its fugitive manifestations may be one of them. But what is this world like? How would you describe it? To say that anything in it is like the impressions which are its effects is to ask for the reminder that nothing can be like an impression except its

I. The Philosophy of David Hume, Ch. I and II.

fainter copy in the imagination. To say that it is not like its effects makes it very difficult to answer the question, and impossible if one is also demanding definitions for all descriptive words in terms of impressions or of the "manner" in which impressions present themselves to the mind. Hume has put himself into the position of being unable to allow any content to our "natural beliefs" in an external world without contradicting himself, unless he rejects any form of a representative theory of perception.

And of course he does, when he is expressly dealing with the question. The world does not contain objects that resemble impressions, or objects that do not resemble them; it is the world of impressions themselves. The senses cannot justify a belief in the "distinct" and "continued" existence of any object of sense, and reason shows the belief to be unjustifiable. The way in which "imagination" works to produce it can be explained. If Hume does not say that the belief is a true belief, he is still where Reid saw him. And he could not, in Reid's opinion, even say that it might be a true belief.

What is an 'impression'? "I ask the philosopher this question; but I find no answer to it. And when I read all that he has written on this subject, I find this word impression sometimes used to signify an operation of the mind, sometimes the object of the operation; but for the most part, it is a vague and indetermined word that signifies both .... Mr Hume's system, with regard to the mind, required a language of a different structure from the common: or, if expressed in plain English, would have been too shocking to the common sense of mankind .... if a man would persuade me that the moon which I see, and my seeing it, are not two things, but one and the same thing, he will answer his purpose less by arguing this point in plain English, than by confounding the two under one name - such as that of an impression."[I.]

I. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch. I, pp.227-228.

Reid's puzzlement is not genuine. Everything Hume says of impressions leads us to think that the thing I see and my seeing it "are not two things, but one and the same thing". Hume has been meaning by 'impression' or 'perception' - Reid is perfectly certain - something which is at once an object and an act of perception. He has meant by the words what Berkeley meant by 'idea'. Ideas cannot exist unperceived; nothing can be separated from itself. The same disability prevents the unperceived existence of 'impressions' or 'perceptions'. If the time has now come to sanction our belief that the moon is there whether we see it or not, it will be necessary to change the meaning of 'impression'.

The "supposition of the continu'd existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction", Hume says.[I.] What then is an 'impression' or a 'perception'? We are not helped at this point by being told that 'perception' and 'object' are interchangeable words which Hume will be using to refer simply to anything presented to us by our senses, to the sort of thing that a common man calls "a hat or shoe or stone". We want the "more philosophical way of speaking and thinking" which Hume has dispensed with for the moment in giving this explanation (p.202). When this is restored, it is clear that the words 'impression' and 'perception' do not have the metaphysical neutrality of the word 'object' if this word is used for a thing with no implications as to the conditions of the thing's existence. The principle that nothing is ever really present to the mind besides its own perceptions would be the most banal truism, if 'objects', keeping its neutrality, could replace 'perceptions'. Reid is not mistaken in thinking that in Hume's meaning perceptions and impressions are objects which have no being when they are not being perceived. How then is the 'continued' existence of our perceptions possible? We say that hats, shoes and stones exist in our absence. Is Hume merely authorizing us to go on saying so, provided we mean that they would

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I. Treatise, Bk. I, Pt. IV, Sec. II, p.208.

exist, or could be perceived, if we were present? He has too much respect for our natural beliefs. When he denies that there is any contradiction, any absurdity in the supposition that objects of sense continue to exist after we have ceased to perceive them, he means by 'continue to exist' what we mean.

The continued existence of our perceptions when we do not have them is possibl because "what we call a mind, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos'd, tho'falsely, to be endow'd with a perfect simplicity and identity. Now as every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be consider'd as separately existent; it evidently follows, that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being." (p. 207)

All perceptions have the same metaphysical status. "'Tis also evident, that colours, sounds, etc. are originally on the same footing with the pain that arises from steel, and pleasure that proceeds from a fire; and that the difference betwixt them is founded neither on perception nor reason, but on the imagination." (p. I92) All perceptions are separable existents. There could not be unfelt pain, but there might be a pain which no one felt. Colours and sounds are necessarily sensations, but possibly ownerless sensations. Reid said that Hume had discovered that there could be thought without a thinker, love without a lover, treason without a traitor; a 'bundle' is a mere aggregation.[I.] One dismisses this rhetoric of Reid's perhaps as a crude misunderstanding invited by a crude word. But unless Hume has changed the meaning of 'perceptions' when he comes to speak of the detachability of perceptions from the bundle, or unless - and this would make Hume unrecognizable - he has never meant more by 'perceptions' than objects of awareness, never meant that they were indissoluble hyphenations of object and

I. Inquiry, Ch. II, Sec. VI, p. I09.

awareness, some such possibility is his discovery.

Whether Hume aimed at philosophical scepticism, is a question to which Reid would have answered Yes and, preoccupied as he is with the implications of the theory of ideas, would not have thought particularly important. He would have thought it important to insist that if Hume intended, as Kemp Smith maintains, to avoid scepticism by bringing common sense beliefs into line with moral beliefs, he would first have had to reform his account of moral beliefs. "Mr Hume will have the Moral Sense to be only a power of feeling without judging".[1] If the convictions of common sense are beliefs merely in the sense that Hume allows moral beliefs to be beliefs, they may be monitored by Nature herself and there is no epistemological mystery, since they make no epistemological claims.

And it is with very dubious epistemological claims that common sense breaks through in the Treatise. Reid and Beattie thought that Hume was speaking with them against himself when they came on the places where he seems to say that nature silences the sceptic. But it is hard to make out what significance Hume attaches in the Treatise to the fact that when you have finished philosophizing you have to "live, and talk, and act like other people". You must yield to the current of nature. And in this "blind submission" show a final scepticism? Or yielding to the current, are you safely trusting yourself to something that will sweep you out of scepticism into truth beyond the reach of reason?[2] Hume does not seem to have made up his mind, but the tone is wrong for the second interpretation and not really so very much better when he says that nature forces belief, like breathing and feeling, on us.[3] That is how, as a matter of fact, it is, with a shrug as to whether that is all there is to it.

The tone changes in the Enquiry; our natural beliefs have acquired a less ambiguous authority. The extreme sceptic can raise difficulties to which no

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1. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.674.
2. Bk.I, Pt.IV, Sec.VII, p. 269.
3. Bk. I, Pt.IV, Sec.I, p.183.

solutions can be found, but he knows himself, as we all do, that his conclusions are dream-conclusions. "Common sense and reflection" are correctives[1] (in the Treatise "carelessness and in-attention"). The change is strongly marked in the section where Hume deals with our belief in the uniformity of nature.

"Sceptical Solutions of Sceptical Doubts"; Beattie runs the title-phrases contemptuously together, but Hume speaks ~~in this section~~ as a subtler Reid. "My practice, you may say, refutes my doubts [respecting the inference to the future from the past] But you mistake the purport of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher .... I want to learn the foundation of this inference."[2] The foundation is still 'custom', as in the Treatise but without the sceptical implications of 'custom' in the Treatise. The subjective principle is somehow able to be the foundation for an objective inference, as though the correspondence between the succession of our ideas determined by custom and the course of nature had been arranged, as perhaps it has.[3]

If we are to hold the beliefs which are sanctioned in the Enquiry, what are we to believe concerning the world presented to the senses? That when our eyes are shut it is like it is when they are open? That there is something there, but something so indeterminate as not to be worth a sceptic's cavil? Nature and reason are in contradiction and no directions for our belief emerge.

Hume made the Enquiries the standard of his "philosophical sentiments and principles" - "a compleat Answer", he tells his publisher Strachan, "to Dr Reid and to that bigotted silly Fellow, Beattie".[4] They would not have thought so; the theory of ideas has not been abandoned, and the scepticism of the Treatise is what it leads to.

1. Sec. XII, Pts.II, and III, pp.160-161.
2. Sec. IV, Pt.II, p.38.
3. Sec. V, Pt.II, p.52-54.
4. Greig, The Letters of David Hume, Vol.II, p.301.

3. The Sceptical Conclusion

When philosophers split objects into two "where others find but one", they compensated for the extravagance by economizing on the number of the mind's operations, making one of these do the work of three: perceiving, remembering, imagining all became the perception of an idea. The uniqueness of each is a matter of plain experience, and plainly expressed in common language. Common language was not good enough for the philosophers who knew what was going on in perceiving, remembering and imagining. They substituted their theory-darkened language and in its shadow what was clear becomes opaque and different things are blurred into one another.[1]

The linguistic accidents behind the extended use of the term 'perception' quite escaped Reid. He did not see that it was as non-commital, as satisfactory and as unsatisfactory a word as his own word 'thought' "which includes all the operations of our minds". For him it was implicated in the ideal theory from the first. And with Hume, "Love is a perception, hatred a perception; desire is a perception, will is a perception; and by the same rule, a doubt, a question, a command, is a perception. This is an intolerable abuse of language, which no philosopher has authority to introduce."[2] The extent of the abuse ought to have warned Reid that its purpose was not even in Hume to achieve a coalesence of perception, memory and imagination. Reid has sunk too much polemical capital into the opinion that the modern philosophers have been turning the different kinds of cognitive act into a single kind, to match a single kind of object, for him to give it up on being told that historically the extended use of the word 'perception' did not have significant theoretical implications. If there are ideas, one is simply aware of them, though the awareness may be called by the different names of 'perceiving', 'remembering', 'imagining'.

1. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.369 and II, Ch.XIV, pp.305-306.
2. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch. I, p.227.

And he would not have been impressed by the protest that the word 'perception' never was used because it never could have been used to smudge perception, memory and imagination into one and the same thing. Reid knows that nobody ever held that the three words are synonyms and proposed a simplified vocabulary in which 'perception' takes their place. Everyone admits that there is a difference between the three things, but Hume made the difference a matter of degree: Act and object is in each case identified, and this identity of act and object is a 'perception'; perceptions are either impressions or ideas; "the difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind";[1] they are perceptions, therefore, in a diminishing order of intensity. And nothing but perceptions exist or are conceivable: " 'tis impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of any thing specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appear'd in that narrow compass."[2] Not only then do perceiving, remembering and imagining differ only in degree, but the real the remembered and the imaginary shade off into one another as higher and lower on a single scale of intensity. Hume's outrageous doctrines are not merely Hume's doctrines Reid insists; they are "justly deduced" from the theory of ideas.

Beattie has a jocose refutation of Hume: If Hume is right 'it will follow that the idea of a roaring lion must emit audible sound, almost, if not altogether, as loud, and as terrible, as the royal beast in person could exhibit; - that two ideal bottles of brandy will intoxicate as far at least as two genuine bottles of wine; - and that I must be greatly hurt, if not dashed to pieces, if I am so imprudent, as to form only the idea of a bomb bursting under my feet.'[3]

1. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt.I, Sec.I, p.I.
2. Bk.I, Pt.II, Sec.VI, p.67-68.
3. Immutable Truth, p.248.

Reid, adding Hume's opinion that belief and expectation are enlivened ideas, expounds the doctrine of the ideal scale of intensity:

"The belief which we have in perception, is a belief of the present existence of the object; that which we have in memory, is a belief of its past existence; the belief of which we are now speaking [the belief involved in expectation] is a belief of its future existence; and in imagination there is no belief at all. Now, I would gladly know of this author, how one degree of vivacity fixes the existence of the object to the present moment; another carries it back to time past; a third, taking a contrary direction, carries it into futurity; and a fourth carries it out of existence altogether. Suppose, for instance, that I see the sun rising out of the sea; I remember to have seen him rise yesterday; I believe he will rise tomorrow near the same place; I can likewise imagine him rising in that place, without any belief at all. Now, according to this sceptical hypothesis, this perception, this memory, this foreknowledge, and this imagination, are all the same idea, diversified only by different degrees of vivacity. The perception of the sun rising is the most lively idea; the memory of his rising yesterday is the same idea a little more faint; the belief of his rising tomorrow is the same idea yet fainter; and the imagination of his rising is still the same idea, but faintest of all. One is apt to think, that the idea might gradually pass through all possible degrees of vivacity without stirring out of its place. But, if we think so, we deceive ourselves; for no sooner does it begin to grow languid than it moves backwards into time past. Supposing this to be granted, we expect, at least, that, as it moves backward by the decay of its vivacity, the more that vivacity decays it will go back the farther, until it remove quite out of sight. But here we are deceived again; for there is a certain period of this declining vivacity, when, as if it had met an elastic obstacle in its motion

backward, it suddenly rebounds from the past to the future, without taking the present in its way. And now, having got into the regions of futurity, we are apt to think that it has room enough to spend all its remaining vigour: but still we are deceived; for, by another sprightly bound, it mounts up into the airy region of imagination. So that ideas, in the gradual declension of their vivacity seem to imitate the inflection of verbs in grammar. They begin with the present, and proceed in order to the preterite, the future, and the indefinite. This article of the sceptical creed is indeed so full of mystery, on whatever side we view it, that they who hold this creed are very injuriously charged with incredulity; for, to me, it appears to require as much faith as that of St. Athanasius.'[I.]

There are two questions: Supposing that this is Hume, does the theory of ideas end in Hume? Is this Hume?

The premiss that the mind's only immediate objects are ideas does not, even conjoined with the principle of conceptual empiricism, entail the conclusion that the real, the remembered and the imaginary are more or less of the same thing. It does not end up in that nonsense, because it does not turn perceiving what is there, remembering what was once there, and imagining what was never there into a single awareness of some modification of oneself, strong, weaker and vanishingly faint. Ideas could occupy existence exclusively and remain uniquely distinct species. Reid was historically wrong and logically wrong: 'perception' was not a reductive term when applied to all the cognitive acts, and the theory of ideas does not call for any such reductive term.

Rosmini calls attention to the ~~verious~~ curious half-similarity between Reid's view and Hume's. 'On Reid's view, perceiving, remembering and imagining all have the same kind of object; they differ as different kinds of awareness of it.'[2.] Rosmini's

I. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec. XXIV, pp.198-199.
2. The Origin of Ideas, Vol. I, p.71.

reference is to a passage from the Inquiry: "I beg leave to think, with the vulgar, that, when I remember the smell of the tuberose, that very sensation which I had yesterday, and which has now no more any existence, is the immediate object of my memory; and when I imagine it present, the sensation itself, and not any idea of it, is the object of my imagination. But, though the object of my sensation, memory, and imagination, be in this case the same, yet these acts or operations of the mind are as different, and as easily distinguishable, as smell, taste and sound."[I.]

The situation which Reid is here describing is not one of pure imagining but a hybrid of remembering, imagining and perceiving. Even so, in spite of his determination to say that things imagined may or may not exist, Reid is driven, as we have seen, by the pressure of his argument against the theory of ideas towards saying that they must exist - at least the fragments of them must. Reid would certainly deny that there is any significant resemblance between his views and Hume's. On Hume's view the act of the mind and its object are identical, and with the object drawn into the act and the act of perception merging into the act of imagination the real merges into the imaginary. But though Reid keeps the act and the object separate, he has not explained how he keeps the imaginary and the real separate, and perhaps they could not be kept separate unless imaginary objects are ideas. And if this is so, one proposition in the theory of ideas has to be true to avoid the conclusion to which the theory of ideas is supposed to lead.

The conclusions to which the theory of ideas leads are not as paradoxical as Reid supposed. Are Hume's conclusions as paradoxical as Reid supposed? Hume does say that perceptions are the only conceivable existents; that they fall into two classes, impressions and ideas; that the difference between impressions and ideas consists in their relative degree of vivacity (without metaphor, that they differ

I. Ch. II, Sec. III, p.106.

"only in degree not in nature".[1] It is no more than putting together these things that Hume does say to have him holding that the real, the imagined and the remembered are graduations on a single scale. No more possibly for single impressions and ideas, but the real is only half real without the other impressions which cluster round a genuine impression when a thing is actually seen or touched, and are absent in memory and imagination. And the ideas of memory do, and the ideas of imagination do not preserve the original order of impressions. This difference seems to disappear on Hume's second thoughts ; but it appeared ambiguously and it disappears ambiguously; it came in perhaps as a constitutive feature of memory and it goes out perhaps as an applicable criterion of memory.[2] And when Hume says that impressions and ideas differ "only in degree, not in nature", he may not have meant it, because he goes on to say things that seem to imply that impressions and ideas, and ideas and ideas differ not only in degree but in nature.

Comparing memory and imagination in the first section of the Treatise in which he deals with them, Hume speaks of the contrast of force and languor as a "sensible sign" of the difference between the two "species of ideas". In the second of the sections he says that an idea of the memory can lose its vivacity until it is mistaken for an idea of the imagination and that an idea of the imagination can acquire such a vivacity that it becomes a "counterfeit" memory. As Kemp Smith points out, there could be no question of mistake and counterfeiting if the difference between ideas of memory and imagination was a relative degree of vivacity. Similarly an exchange of vivacity between an impression and an idea causes one to be mistaken for the other. There must therefore be some other difference between them than a difference merely in degree.

1. Bk. I, Sec. I, p.3. Hume is speaking of simple impressions and simple ideas, but as complex ideas are formed either by simple aggregation or by reflecting the order of impressions, the principle is unaffected.
2. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt.I, Sec.I and Bk.I, Pt.III, Sec.V.

We now need to know what is meant bt 'vivacity' and its synonyms and their opposites. They are words we would have to use to express the familiar distinction between clear and vivid, and faint and blurred imagery. Hume does not use them in this way; we are not deceived by sharp imagery into taking fancies for realities. The situations in which an impression and an idea coincide in the vivacity Hume means are those borderline experiences between sense and imagination in which, for example, we are not sure whether we have heard a sound or only imagined it; those situations in which the two sorts of ideas coincide in vivacity are situations in which we are not sure whether we are remembering or just imagining. And there is no feature in these dubious experiences for the faint intensity to mark except the fact that they are dubious, and in the first kind the fact that the sound, smell or whatever it might have been, if there was one, was very faint. If after keeping clear of the invitation in the scale of relative intensity to compare the sound of a pin drop with an imaginary clap of thunder, or the potencies of real wine and unreal brandy, one sets about thinking of what there is to be said in its favour, it is hard to find anything.

In the Appendix to the Treatise memory and imagination are distinguished "by the different feeling of the ideas which they present" (P. 628). If Hume had said that there is an indescribable difference between remembering and imagining as psychological experiences, he would have conveyed the same unexciting but useful information. He goes on, however, to consider the nature of the feeling: "And here I believe every one will readily agree with me, that the ideas of the memory are more strong and lively than those of the fancy.

Hume's last words on belief are less equivocal. "An idea assented to feels different from a fictitious idea." To explain this different feeling by calling it 'a superior force, or vivacity or solidity, or firmness, or steadiness' is to

use words that "express something near it". "But its true and proper name is belief[1], which is a term that every one sufficiently understands in common life; as indefinable, Hume says in the Enquiry, as "the feelings of cold or passion of anger"[2]. Hume has come a long way round to reach Reid.

That is if it is Reid that has been reached. One would not have been surprised to find Reid claiming that there was nothing in Hume more utterly sceptical than the assertion that the "three acts of the understanding", conception, judgment and reasoning, "all resolve themselves into the first, and are nothing but particular ways of conceiving our objects"[3]. As Reid understood 'conception', as the logicians had understood 'conception', the question whether a conception is true or false in the sense of corresponding or conflicting with reality cannot arise. And if judgment, and therefore belief, is resolved into conception, the question whether a belief is true or false in the sense of corresponding or conflicting with reality cannot arise. And Hume may have really intended by the resolution to make it a question that could not arise. If he had intended this, and kept to his intention, "enlivened ideas" could give way to "feeling" and "feeling" to 'belief' in the description of the phenomenology of belief, and Hume would still be as far from Reid as when he first began to speak of the nature of belief.

And perhaps Hume did mean, though not consistently, that the difference between impressions and ideas of memory and ideas of imagination is constituted by a difference in 'vivacity'; that there is no more to being real (and really remembering) and being imaginary, as far as individual impressions and ideas are concerned, than feeling real and feeling imaginary. Real and imaginary, in any further sense, is a matter of what comes(or could have come) before and after the individual impression or idea. Did I hear or merely imagine the footfall on the path? Well, did I hear the door-handle being tried a moment later? Would I have seen someone

1. Treatise, Appendix, p.629.
2. Sec.V, Pt.II, p.48.
3. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt. III, Sec.VII, p.97.

there if I had pulled aside the curtains and looked out? Reid has perhaps not altogether misunderstood Hume in the ironical exposition of the scale of intensity. Where he lost Hume's meaning was in thinking that a single impression or idea could be considered by itself.

The theory of ideas is to have Hume as its conclusion. If Hume is to be pinned down to shading off the real, the remembered and the imaginary into one another, its sceptical implications, as we have seen, do not go so far. At least they go so far that nothing but perceptions are left, nothing but ideas, to return to Reid's word. Or has Reid made a mistake here also?

The question is whether the theoty is a universal solvent, of "mind" as well as of "matter". The answer depends on whether, according to the theory, all direct objects without exception are ideas. If they are, then it is . But why should they be, if Reid is right about the principle from which the theory itself is derived. This is the principle of cognitive contact, and nothing could be closer to the mind than the mind itself. When Reid is deducing from the theory of ideas Hume's conclusions with regard to the mind he states the theory in a form that is already Humian: "The received doctrine of ideas is the principle from which it [the opinion that there may be thought without a thinker] is deduced, and of which indeed it seems to be a just and natural consequence .... It is a fundamental principle of the ideal system, that every object of thought must be an impression or an idea - that is, a faint copy of some preceding impression. This is a principle so commonly received, that the author above mentioned, although his whole system is built upon it, never offers the least proof of it. It is upon this principle, as a fixed point that he erects his metaphysical engines to overturn heaven and earth, body and spirit. And, indeed, in my apprehension, it is altogether sufficient for the purpose."[I.]

If Berkeley had worked from the theory of ideas as a premiss for the elimination

I. Inquiry, Ch.II, Sec.VI, pp.108-109.

of external objects, from the theory as found in Locke, he could consistently have stopped at his own conclusions and need not have gone on to Hume's - so far at least as the self is concerned. For its dissolution other premisses are needed. Not even if the theory of ideas is understood as including the principle of conceptual empiricism do we have adequate premisses. We need to know also that there is no 'impression' of the self as a single thing, unanalysable into its experiences or into any mode of their combination. And its absence is not an empirical discovery - at least we know before we look what we have got to find. The introduction to the introspective experiment which reports nothing but a "bundle of perceptions" ends axiomatically: "All these our particular perceptions are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately consider'd, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything to support their existence."[1.]

With this axiom to secure the appeal to introspection from any inconclusiveness, Hume defeats the metaphysicians' "claim that the self is simple at any time and numerically identical through time", and defeats his own patient and subtle attempt to find an alternative unity for it. He has to leave its fragments stuck together and "plead the privilege of a sceptic".[2.]

"Three laws of association, joined to a few original feelings", says Reid, make up a human being when Hume is his creator. "Is this the man that Nature made?.... A puppet. It shows tolerably by candle light; but, brought into clear day, and taken to pieces, it will appear to be a man made with mortar and a trowel."[3.]

Reid attacks the principle that we begin in experience with simples and build up complexities out of them. He attacks it as an isolated opinion - Locke has made a mistake. Reid does not appear to see the connection (prepared for still

1. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt.IV, Sec.VI, p.252.
2. Appendix, p.636.
3. Inquiry, Introduction, SecVI, p.102.

further by Locke's hesitancy over the status of relations) between this opinion and the fragmentation of everything in which Reid saw the theory of ideas ending; how easy it would be to go on and say that in building up the complexities we suppl supply the cement ourselves. Locke's mistake ought to be corrected. The truth is, as we discover by reflection on experience, that we begin with the complex and reach the simple by analytic abstraction. "Nature presents no object to the senses or to consciousness, that is not complex." Complex, and until we have learnt to distinguish its components, vague. "So that it is not by the senses immediately, but rather by the powers of analysing and abstraction, that we get the most simple and the most distinct notions even of the objects of sense." I.

Many of Hume's "peculiar tenets", Reid says, are built upon the maxim that whatever we can conceive is possible. The maxim has the general sanction of philosophers; Reid has never seen it questioned. (Reid is inclined to think that the maxim is a consequence of the "received doctrine of ideas": since every idea copies an impression, there can be no idea of something impossible.) Some philosophers take it further than others and hold also that whatever we cannot conceive is impossible. If they are not mistaken, we have "a short road to the determination of every question about the possibility or impossibility of things. We need only look into our own breast, and that, like the Urim and Thummim, will give an infallible answer. If we can conceive a thing, it is possible; if not,it is impossible. And,surely, every man may know whether he can conceive what is affirmed or not."

The maxim, even in its narrower extent, Reid thinks is false in every plausible meaning(short of a completely tautological meaning) which can be given to it.

"Whatever is said to be possible or impossible, is expressed by a proposition." What is it to conceive a proposition? Is it something more than understanding it? By the 'simple apprehension' or 'conception' of a proposition there does not seem to be anything more that could be meant. Take a true proposition and one stating

I. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.III, p.376.

an impossibility, a demonstrated conclusion in geometry, for example, and its contradictory. The second is as easily understood as the first. Every necessarily true proposition has a contradictory which is impossible, and "he that conceives one conceives both". Every reductio ad absurdum "requires us to conceive things that are impossible, in order to prove them to be so".

The meaning of the maxim is perhaps that nothing we conceive, that is judge to be possible, is impossible. Have people never thought something to be possible and been mistaken? They have "contradictory judgments about what is possible or impossible, as well as about other things."[1.]

Reid does not trace the connection between the maxim of possibility and any of Hume's conclusions, nor the connection between it and another of Hume's principles: the conceptually distinguishable is capable of separate existence. Reid examines this principle in his discussion of abstract ideas and then it disappears from his attention.

"Things inseparable in their nature may be distinguished in our conception. And we need go no farther to be convinced of this than the instance here brought to prove the contrary.[2.] The precise length of a line, Hume says, is not distinguishable from the line. When I say, This is a line, I say and mean one thing. When Issay, It is a line of three inches, I say and mean another thing. If this be not to distinguish the precise length of the line from the line, I know not what it is to distinguish."[3.]

Reid has had one of Hume's most fundamental and persistent postulates under scrutiny, and too intent on deducing Hume's conclusions from a single premiss, he does not see where they largely come from. That "the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences"[4.] is its immediate corollary,[5.] and the

1. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch.III, pp.377-379.
2. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt. I, Sec.VII, pp.I8-I9.
3. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch.VI, p.4I0.
4. Treatise, Appendix, p.636. Hume very puzzlingly says that he cannot render this principle consistent with the principle that "all our perceptions are distinct existences", and that he cannot give up either of them. But 'distinct' existences

negative side of Hume's doctrine of the self and of causation is given with it.

Reid would have admitted that it shattered the self. He would have wanted to speak carefully of the damage it does to the relation of cause and effect. In one way, of course, it is fatal: nothing can owe its existence to anything else, if everything is entirely loose and separate from everything else. And it is part of common sense belief that everything that happens has a cause that makes it happen. On the other hand, Hume is right (except for leaving out the Divine agency) in reducing causal transactions between bodies to a matter of regular antecedence and consequence. He is wrong in thinking that the future is locked up against us because we have no justification for thinking that the mere regularity will continue. The inductive principle - Reid never gets it to more precision than that the future will be like the past, or some such vague equivalent - is an autonomous principle of common sense.

Supposing Hume had been willing to dismiss his doubts about induction, could he have secured the empirical philosophy he always wanted, except in his destructive moods, to secure? Could the scientific as well as the mathematical treatises be saved from the burning of the books?, Phenomenalistically interpreted, they could be, but this would not have satisfied Hume except in the first book of the Treatise, and not always even there. Is a phenomenalistic interpretation the condition of their acquittal? To waive it Hume would either have to withdraw his demand for 'impressions' to match concepts and also allow causal inference to transcend experience; or, alternatively, allow sense experience to transcend 'perceptions'. Hume could not have gone where he wanted to, in the way he wanted to, and taken the theory of ideas even in its mildest form (as a theory of sense perception) along with him. At its mildest it was too strong for his moderate

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are existences between which there are no 'real' connexions, or between which at least no connexions "are ever discoverable by human understanding". (p.635). From the context it is clear that Hume means, not that the inconsistency is between the principles themselves, but between them and any satisfactory analysis of self-identity.

conclusions without a revolution in his other principles; at its strongest, not strong enough for his radical conclusions. Reid was asking Hume to be too economical: that there is nothing but ideas connected by merely casual associations, is not a deduction from the theory of ideas alone.

CHAPTER 111 COMMON SENSE - (1)

1. Plain Truth and Strange Doubt

To ask whether common sense beliefs are true is to ask a disreputable question A philosopher who had any appreciation of what makes philosophers look foolish would carefully avoid it in the company of plain men if there was any risk that he might be taken seriously. One would not look more ridiculous attacking or defending the existence of tables and chairs, of other people besides oneself and so on than in asking doubtfully whether there are any. And the question is not to be asked any longer in the company of philosophers. James Oswald's prophetic eye foresaw the day when even among them common sense would overwhelm scepticism and incredulity. However let us bring ourselves to ask the question and ask it concretely.

Do I, for example, know that I am sitting on a chair with a table in front of me? Do I know that I am the same person as I was yesterday; that what I am doing now I am doing of my own free will? Do I know that there are other people besides myself with their own thoughts and feelings? Do I know that this day will end and that another day will come? Of course I know all these things and many more of the same sort, and I know that other people know the same sort of things about themselves and about other people.[1.] I know, therefore, that there are material things, that there is personal identity and free will, that there are other minds and valid inductions. And the man who denies or doubts such plain truths of common sense must be "disordered in his intellectuals", Oswald says; must be "out of his senses", Beattie says; needs for a cure not logic and metaphysics, Reid says, but "physic and good regimen". The contradictory of a sense belief, they all agree is 'absurd', and is properly met not with argument

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I. After Moore, "A Defence of Common Sense", Contemporary British Philosophy (2nd. series)

but with laughter.

Beattie and Oswald object to argument as an appeal to the wrong tribunal. In fact it is the mad determination to argue everything out that has caused many philosophers to set themselves up against common sense. Reid is very serious about the absurdity of opinions that contradict a belief of common sense: "Opinions which contradict first principles, [that is the principles of common sense] are distinguished from other errors by this:- That they are not only false but absurd".[1] To have absurd opposites is one of the criteria which distinguish common sense beliefs from inveterate prejudices. And apart from the fact that the absurd is the absurd and any argument against it out of place, argument would need premisses more obviously true than the truths of common sense, and there are none.

They are too obviously true - how could anyone deny or even doubt them? What philosopher in fact ever has? Who was it, for instance, that Moore refuted when, with a more sophisticated simplicity even than Reid's, he proved the existence of material things by holding up his hands?[2]

There has surely been the absolute scepticism with a blanket claim to know nothing about anything - Pyrrho who lived to be ninety led round by a keeper.[3] And, Beattie and Oswald would ask without hesitation, is not the denial that there are material things just what constitutes any phenomenalism, the denial of other minds a feature of a sufficiently radical positivism, the denial of personal identity the negative side of every serialist view of the self, the denial of free will the meaning of determinism, and the denial of inductive validity Hume's

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.IV, p.438.
2. We might have thought that the refutation was meant for phenomenalists of one sort or another. But Moore explains (The Philosophy of G. E. Moore, edit. Schlipp, p.670) that it was directed against the philosophers who have "used 'material thing' in such a sense that from 'There are no material things' there does follow 'There are no human hands'".
3. Inquiry, Ch.I, Sec. V, p.102.

special discovery? More carefully than Beattie and Oswald, Reid and Stewart would insist that though one might not find philosophers saying that there are no material things etc. it would follow from what many philosophers do say (and too plainly for anyone not to see it) that there are none.

The total sceptic's scepticism was a pretence - otherwise he was mad. And if there was a man who really believed that there were no tables and chairs, or who was absolutely convinced that he was another person every other minute, or who never spoke to anyone else because he was quite sure that there was no one else to speak to, or who really thought that his food was as likely to poison him as not....he would be mad. The Common Sense philosophers cannot bring themselves to say simply that is what the paradoxical philosophers are. They do not adopt that reassuring explanation of philosophers' extraordinary doubts and denials of the plain truths of common sense; in spite of the therapeutic recommendation, in spite of the comparison of the man who doubts his own existence until a Cartesian demonstration of it is provided with the man who is afraid that he might be made of glass, and in spite of the most deliberate of Reid's explanations of what he means by 'common sense': "This inward light or sense is given by heaven to different persons in different degrees. There is a certain degree of it which is necessary to our being subjects of law and government, capable of managing our own affairs, and answerable for our conduct towards others: this is called common sense, because it is common to all men with whom we can transact business, or call to account for their conduct.

"The laws of all civilised nations distinguish those who have this gift of heaven, from those who have it not... It is easily discerned by its effects in men's actions, in their speeches, and even in their looks; and when it is a question whether a man has this natural gift or not, a judge or a jury, upon a short conversation with him, can, for the most part, determine the question with

great assurance."[1]

Beattie and Oswald, although they attributed to philosophers a number of opinions which no sane man could hold, at least did not muddle the senses of 'common sense' in the disastrous way Reid did, when they came to say what they meant by it.[2] Reid's definition would leave him with no work at all to do. He would have no philosophical opponents in his defence of common sense truth (except those who would tell him that he had none) if the only attacks on it were from people without common sense as he has defined it. There is no arguing with madmen.

The wildest philosophical paradox, however, does not prevent its advocates from behaving like other men. All the Common Sense philosophers see this, and they would all like to give the same explanation. Beattie and Oswald sometimes say that the philosophers did not believe their doctrines sincerely enough to act on them.[3] The paradoxical opinions cannot be translated into practice, Stewart says.[4] And Reid agrees; they have to be given up in practice. If Hume's friends had suspected that even in solitude he tried to put into practice the principles which he confessed he could not hold in society, they would have had the charity never to have left him alone.[5]

If, however, the Common Sense philosophers really believed that the paradoxical philosophers did not really believe their paradoxes (because no man in his senses could), what need was there for the fierce refutations ? Common sense had no genuine opponents. The paradoxical philosophers had to be refuted because they were unaccountably both sane and not merely pretending to hold the opinions they did. Or is this strange perversity not there at all and only seems to be there through a misunderstanding of these opinions?

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.II,P.422.
2. Stewart never liked the term because of its ambiguities. See Chapter IV.
3. Beattie, Immutable Truth, Pt.I, Ch.II,Sec.VIII, p.134; Oswald, A Pleá to Common Sense, Vol. I, p. 96.
4. Elements, VolII, Ch.I, Sec.II, p.49.
5. Inquiry, Ch.I, Sec.V, p.102.

Many philosophers nowadays are very sure that philosophers, what ever they might have said, have never disbelieved or even doubted the plain truths of common sense. The phenomenalist is not doubting the existence of tables and chairs. The positivist does not think that other people are untenanted bodies. No one who holds a serialist view of the self believes that he is continually going out of existence and being replaced by someone with the same name and a similar body. Determinism does not take away the difference between having to do something and doing it of your own free will. Hume had no need to be relieved every time he woke up and found that daylight had come again. If philosophers have said that there were no material objects etc. (or that perhaps there were none), they did not mean what they might seem to have meant. When they have said things that seem to have implied those denials, nothing that they have said really implied them. So there is no need to suppose that they only half believed their paradoxes (in theory but not in practice), or believed them only while philosophizing and the rest of the time with the rest of the world (Hume in solitude and in society). They were not engaged in an impossible conflict with common sense. To think that they were is to misunderstand either them or it. In fact, this criticism of Reid and his school would run, the Common Sense philosophers misunderstood both. Beattie and Oswald steadily misunderstood the nature of the theories they attacked; Reid and Stewart intermittently. They all misunderstood the nature of common sense. And misunderstanding it, they could not see why they were right in claiming final authority for it.

The "argument of the paradigm case" would show why. Crudely: if there is any word the meaning of which can be taught by reference to paradigm cases, then no argument whatever could ever prove that there are no cases whatever of whatever it is . Thus, since the meaning of 'of his own freewill' can be taught by reference to such paradigm cases as that in which a man, under no social pressure

marries the girl he wants to marry (how else could it be taught?): it cannot be right, on any grounds whatsoever, to say that no one ever acts of his own freewil For cases such as the paradigm, which must occur if the word is ever to be thus explained (and which certainly do in fact occur), are not in that case specimens which might have been wrongly identified: to the extent that the meaning of the expression is given in terms of them they are, by definition, what 'acting of one's own freewill is'...

"To see the power, and the limitations, of the Argument of the Paradigm Case is to realize how much of common sense can, and how much cannot, be defended against philosophical paradoxes by simple appeal to the ordinary use of words; an why."[1]

If this argument shows why the Common Sense philosophers were right about the absurdity of the denial of the truths of common sense, it also shows why they were wrong in reading this denial into the language of philosophical paradox. (Or else that they were in a stronger position than they realized; what they thought was factual absurdity was logical nonsense.) And if the truth of the propositions of common sense is to be established in the way the argument prescribes, its further consequence is that in loading them until their truth is no longer given with their meaning, the Common Sense philosophers loaded them with an alien content. And with this content their denial is no longer absurd.

Supposing for the time being that philosophical propositions can never really collide with the propositions of common sense, they can seem to do so in two ways. They can seem to state or imply that common sense propositions are doubtfully true. They can seem to state or imply that common sense propositions are certainly false or meaningless or radically confused and are to be rejected altogether. We shall now look at the first of these apparent conflicts. Common sense takes common sense beliefs as certain, will not allow the possibility that they may be mistaken, repudiates, for example, the statement that there may be no material things as decisively as the statement that there are no material things. The philosophical positions with which we are here concerned appear to represent no matter of fact belief as certain, or more extremely no belief as certain, or more extremely no belief as more probable than any other. We are not at present concerned with the certainty or otherwise of common sense beliefs outside this general context of doubt.

Reid and his school are quite sure that there are philosophical assertions which really do conflict with common sense in the

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I. Antony Flew, "Philosophy And Language", Essays In Conceptual Analysis(edit. Flew), pp.19-20. The limitation of the argument is that by itself it cannot be used "to establish any matter of value, moral or otherwise".

first of these ways, though Reid and Stewart had some idea why one might want to hold that some of these assertions merely seem to.

The statement that there is no knowledge of matters of fact takes common sense truth into its orbit. Reid does not like restrictions on the use of the word 'knowledge' which would allow it only a fraction of its usual application, but he does not find anything disturbing in the statement or in its familiar equivalent that matters of fact are matters of probable opinion. In either variant it is a logician's classificatory marking, not a matter of fact proposition; the word ' probable' is given a technical sense different from its ordinary sense. "In common language, probable evidence is considered as an inferior degree of evidence,,and is opposed to certainty: so that what is certain is more than probable, and what is only probable is not certain. Philosophers consider probable evidence not as a degree, but as a species of evidence, which is opposed, not to certainty, but to another species of evidence, called demonstration. ..."That there is such a city as Rome, I am as certain as of any proposition in Euclid; but the evidence is not demonstrative, but of that kind which philosophers call probable. Yet, in common language, it would sound oddly to say, it is probable there is such a city as Rome, because it would imply some degree of doubt or uncertainty."[I.]

Stewart agrees with Reid that the statement that no matters of fact are more than probable is a logician's statement, and does not mean what it would mean in ordinary speech. "As certain as death - as certain as the rising of the sun - are proverbial modes of expression in all countries; and they are, both of them, borrowed from events which, in philosophical language, are only probable or contingent. In like manner, the existence of the city of Pekin, and

I. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.p.482.

the reality of Caesar's assassination, which the philosopher classes with probabilities, because they rest solely upon the evidence of testimony, are universally classed with certainties by the rest of mankind; and in any case but the statement of a logical theory, the application to such truths of the word probable would be justly regarded as an impropriety of speech."[1]

Stewart, however, is more concerned than Reid about the ambiguity of the word 'probable'. It has caused at least some philosophers to mistake certainties for mere probabilities and to look for demonstrations to convert them into what they already are. "This difference between the technical meaning of the word probability, as employed by logicians, and the notion attached to it in the business of life, together with the erroneous theories[2] concerning the nature of demonstration.... have led many authors of the highest name, in some of the most important arguments which can employ human reason, to overlook that irresistible evidence which was placed before their eyes, in search of another mode of proof altogether unattainable in moral enquiries, and which if it could be attained, would not be less liable to the cavils of sceptics."[3]

If all that is meant by saying that we might be mistaken in all our empirical judgments is that this is always logically possible, Reid would have accepted this self-evident truth. He would not have admitted that it is always possible that we are mistaken. There are matters of fact as certain as any truth in Euclid.[4] There are some matters of fact, Beattie remarks, with regard to which

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I. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.II, Sec.IV, p.180.

2. Stewart's view is that a demonstration has "hypothetical" or suppositional premisses, and the "truth" of its conclusions is no more than the fact that they necessarily follow from their premisses. (Elements,Vol.II, Ch.I, Sec.III.)

3. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.II, Sec.IV,pp.180-181.

4. In any case demonstration could not monopolize certainty, because it is never formally demonstrable that the demonstrative operations have been carried out correctly, however absolutely certain it may be that they have been. And the rules of demonstration have themselves been discovered by "our fallible and uncertain faculties, and have no authority but that of human judgment".(Intellectual Powers,VII, Ch.IV,p.486.) Reid will not allow any proposition an immunity from human error in virtue of its category. Every proposition has to be put together and understood by someone.

we know that if we knew everything, we would not have to change our opinions about them.[1] We know that what we have sat on, bumped into, moved up to the table will not surprisingly turn out to have been an hallucinatory chair. We would refuse to believe anybody who said he thought he might be dreaming that he was awake. We have been certain and not merely felt certain that there were heads under the hats looked down on from the window. There is a stage in the verification of a proposition after which we have a clairvoyant anticipation of the results of further verifications, after which, Reid says, "to desire more evidence would be absurd".[2]

Hume argued that no judgment we ever make can be more than probable, and that only temporarily. Its evidence has always two determinants, one "derived from the nature of the object" and the other "from the nature of the understanding", and the second always subtracts from the first. No matter what the grounds for a judgment appear to be, we must always allow something for the possibility that we are making a mistake. Beginning with less than certainty, we end without even probability, for the subtractions must go on. The reliability of the "faculty which judges" has to be assessed, and we might be making a mistake. The assessment has to be assessed, and we might be making a mistake. By "all the rules of logic" the confidence to which we were originally entitled is whittled down and whittled down, and as it had only a finite value to begin with and the reassessments never end, it ends in nothing.[3]

We make mistakes and this proves, Reid says, that we can make mistakes. It does nothing to prove that we never know that we are not making a mistake. Our general capacity for error is irrelevant to our being right or wrong in particular cases, except in so far as keeping it in mind makes us rather less likely to go wrong. I am reminded, Reid continues, of the fallibility of human judgment

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1. Immutable Truth, Pt.II, Ch.I, Sec.3, p.207.
2. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.III, p.432.
3. Treatise, Bk.I, Pt. IV, Sec. I, p.182.

when I claim to have reached a conclusion demonstratively. I go over my reasoning several times and can find no flaw, have it checked by someone else, who can find no flaw, am willing to hear from the sceptic "what steps in it he thinks fallacious, and why. He makes no objection to any part of the demonstration, but pleads my fallibility in judging. I have made the proper allowance for this already, by being open to conviction."[I.]

Hume does not make it quite clear whether the competence of the understanding is to be examined and re-examined with regard to the matter in hand or with regard to other matters; whether we are to watch its performance on the same argument over and over again or try it out on other arguments. Reid takes it for granted that if you want to find out whether you have made a mistake in A, you work at A again; you do not turn to B and then to the rest of the alphabet. And to come to the same conclusion a second and a third time is a good reason for thinking that you came to the right conclusion the first time, and consequently for thinking that the understanding is capable of truth. What more does anyone want who wants assurances of what Hume calls the 'truth and fidelity' of our faculties?

I might, of course, Reid says, have grounds for being suspicious of my former proceeding. I might have been in a hurry or excited or too interested in getting a particular result. I have to go back over the argument again, cooly, slowly and with the opposite interest. "It is evident that this review of the subject may confirm my first judgment, notwithstanding the suspicious circumstances that attended it. Though the judge was biassed or corrupted, it does not follow that the sentence was unjust. The rectitude of the decision does not depend upon the character of the judge, but upon the nature of the case. From that only, it must be determined whether the decision be just. The circumstances that rendered it suspicious are mere presumptions, which have no force against

I. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch. IV, p.487.

direct evidence."[1]

Our reason and our judgment show their capacity for truth by presenting us with it in particular cases. The sceptic is perhaps still dissatisfied, and wants to ask how we know that what we are calling 'truth' is truth? He cannot see that the answer to the question How do we know that we are not always making a mistake? is that we often do make mistakes.[2] He does not know what it would be like to make a mistake or not to make a mistake. Is he asking a question or merely going through the motions of asking one? If he is asking a question, then the only answer he can be given is that he will have to take the reliability of his faculties on trust. No demonstration of their reliability is possible. The attempt would be like taking a suspected liar's word that he is honest. For the same reason no reason can be given for suspecting them. No argument can be advanced for or against them until we have new faculties to sit in judgment on the old. Inthe meantime we are not left with a choice as to whether or not we shall rely on the ones we have As a brief intellectual feat we can hold ourselves in sceptical suspence towards them, and a man can stand on his hands for a minute or so but he cannot go a journey on them - it is against nature. Stop admiring him and he will soon be found walking on his feet like other people.[3] As Hume remarks after demonstrating that no proposition is more probable than any other: "Whoever has taken the pains to refute the cavils of this total scepticism, has really disputed without an antagonist."[4]

Hume and Reid disagree about the validity of an argument for total scepticism, but they both agree that nobody could really believe what the argument would prove even if it were valid. How nearly the difference between common sense and scepticism is a matter of what one chooses to say about the same empirical facts.

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1. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.IV, p.487.
2. Cp. G. Ryle, Dilemmas, p.94 ff.
3. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, p. 448.
4. Treatise, Bk. I, Pt. IV, Sec.I, p.183.

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What Hume chooses to say - scepticism imposes too great a strain on the imagination - leaves the feeling that scepticism has the last word. ("If we believe, that fire warms, or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise.") The difference between common sense and scepticism is a difference in the way of looking at the same empirical facts. For scepticism there is no right way, or, if there is, nobody knows what it is. For common sense there is a right way and we know what it is, and therefore right and wrong words to express it, or at least a right and wrong intonation when the words which the sceptical philosopher and the common sense philosopher use are the same.

The sceptical language of philosophers, Reid and Stewart recognized, is not always to be taken at its face value. Words such as 'merely probable' even the word 'doubtful', are perhaps being used with meanings different from the meanings they have in common language. If the philosopher, reluctant to have his scepticism withdrawn from him, replies that by 'doubtful' he does mean what everybody means by it, is willing to use any of its ordinary synonyms, then for the Common Sense philosophers the sceptical assertions are false and need some refutation: they show their falsity in particular instances, the sceptic does not believe them himself, cannot act on them. The Common Sense philosophers, however, could hardly have objected to hearing from modern critics of the sceptical language of philosophers that there was nothing to be refuted, that no meaning had been given to the word 'doubtful'. What would the sceptic count as certain? He does not know. What sort of evidence would remove doubt? No evidence would remove the doubt. A 'doubt' which is not contrasted with any certainty and which no imaginable evidence would remove is not a doubt. The shell of the word is in the sceptic's speech but it has nothing inside it. His behaviour shows that he does not believe his assertions; being without meaning there is nothing to believe in them. The illusion of a conflict here between a philosophical assertion and common sense is cast by the illusion of an assertion, in which the key words seem to have a meaning because they had a meaning in the familiar contexts from which they were borrowed.

We have now to consider whether philosophical theories which seem to reject common sense beliefs altogether really do so. And it is a fairly clear consequence of the establishment of common sense truths by paradigmatic cases that whatever these theories are doing they cannot be doing what they may seem to be doing. When philosophers say that there are no material objects but only ideas, sensations perceptions, that there is no permanent self but only the flux of experience; when they say these and similar things, we have missed their point if we think they are denying what everybody knows to be true. Their point is to reject a metaphysics in which common sense has no interest, or perhaps to put forward a metaphysics in which common sense has no interest. Or they are giving

an 'analysis' of the notion of material object, self-identity, and so on. (How readily a philosopher who has said that there were no material objects, only clusters of sensations, would change his statement into There are material objects and they are only clusters of sensations.) Or again, the language of common sense is perhaps being criticized by the theories; there is no question of their proposing alternative beliefs to the beliefs of common sense.

Have then the Common Sense philosophers been defending the beliefs of common sense against imaginary menaces? Some of these interpretations of the nature of philosophical paradox, the collision between common sense and philosophical paradox looks like a purely linguistic collision. Is it purely linguistic on these interpretations and purely linguistic on the other interpretations also? Is it only the language in which the views of phenomenalists, positivists, determinists have been expressed that is intolerable to common sense, while it is neutral towards the views themselves, since it has no metaphysical commitments? Provided the paradoxical philosopher does not say such things as that there are no material objects (and does not use words such as 'idea' in a way that makes it sound as if he was saying them), can he mean what he meant when he did say them, and face no protest from common sense?

Philosophers nowadays have learnt so thoroughly to "speak with the vulgar while they think with the learned" that none of them of any sophistication, whatever their views, would deny, for example, that material objects exist, or allow anyone to put that construction on their words, any more than they would say that they were taking away the distinction between right and wrong whatever their analysis of 'right' and 'wrong'. That mode of speech belongs to a bygone innocence. Hume's views have not changed, but his language is now the same as Reid's.

2. The Metaphysical Commitment of Common Sense

The Common Sense philosophers would have thought that their occupation had gone if it could have been shown to them that the truth of common sense beliefs does not come into philosophical dispute. Professor Moore attempts to show this by shifting the place of dispute over common sense beliefs from their truth to their analysis.

"The earth has existed for many years past." This is certainly true and its analysis quite uncertain. True in some sense or other and its analysis discloses which sense? No, true in its 'ordinary sense', the sense in which everybody would naturally understand it. One hesitates to ask what the statement means in this ordinary sense. "Such an expression as 'The earth has existed for many years past' is the very type of an unambiguous expression, the meaning of which we all understand."[I.] Still if the question is asked, it can be answered simply. You can be told the same thing over again in the same words or the same thing over again in different words. But once talk has been begun about analyzed and unanalyzed meanings here, and the uncertainty of the second has been reflected back on the first, the time for that answer seems to have passed. Once you have reflected that the statement has got to be true whichever of its analyses is true, and once you have turned over in your mind some of its possible analyses (including the one which resolves the unperceived existence of material things into their non-existence except as permanent possibilities of sensation), there is a doubt about the meaning the statement must have in order to satisfy these conditions, and it is not a doubt which you can be sent to the dictionary to resolve.

Is this objection to Moore a general objection to philosophical analysis on the ground that you could not know what P means unless you know whether it means X or Y or Z, where P is a proposition to be analyzed and X, Y and Z are its proposed

I. "A Defence of Common Sense", Contemporary British Philosophy (2nd. series), p.198.

analysis? It is asking a particular question: What could be the ordinary meaning of the statement about the earth's past existence if its analyzed meaning may be what Mill can be taken as saying it is, or what the naivest realist says it is, or if it may be anything between these two extremes? For all these proposals must be reckoned as analytic possibilities if the proposers are not to be represented as doubting or denying a fact which common sense unhesitatingly accepts.

There is a sense in which the statement is certain beyond all philosophical dispute, and that is in so far as it asserts what has been observed and what could have been observed (if there had been observers where no one was). In so far as it is verifiable, this is as far as it is veriable. And one might have supposed that this was its pre-analytic meaning, the sense Moore was referring to in which everyine would naturally understand it (and in which truth could be empirically established for anyone who happened to doubt it). And why should anyone not understand it to be asserting simply this? Nothing, it might be said, is left out; forwhat has been observed is the earth - parts of it, and what could have been observed is the earth - the whole of it. With this meaning, however, all it means, with no content but a phenomenal content asserting nothing but a conditional filling for the blanks in the earth's observed existence, all analyses except those of one type are initially proscribed, and Moore wants to keep the range of possible analyses wide open.

So again, what is the statement asserting when it is asserting something so obviously true that all philosophical dispute is shifted from its truth to its analysis, and yet something which is open to such radically opposed types of analysis? Let us for simplicity concentrate on the verbs without paying any special attention to the particularity of the subject, and since the earth has not been

always all of it continuously under people's observation, let us treat the problem as one of providing for different types of analysis of a statement asserting the existence of a material thing at times when it has not been perceived. We want a sense of "existed", its ordinary sense, which will allow the statement the possibility of either a phenomenalistic or a non-phenomenalistic analysis, the correct analysis to be synonymous in meaning with the unanalyzed statement. And the sense which one naturally thinks of as the ordinary sense of "existed" does not have the necessary plasticity. In the ordinary sense of the word, for example something which does not exist except as a set of possibilities of sensation, does not exist. Understanding the word "existed" in this ordinary sense, one would not naturally understand "The earth existed for many years past" to be asserting simply what has been observed and what could have been observed if observers who were absent had been present.

Even supposing, however, that the required sense is to be found, and that one has somehow missed it because of its very ordinariness, all philosophical dispute would not be shifted from the truth of the statement to the correctness of its analysis. Because if the unanalyzed statement might be synonymous in meaning with a statement giving some analysis of the second type, that is enough. For the phenomenalist ex officio, it might be false.

The philosophers who came to share Moore's conviction that the beliefs of common sense are true beyond all doubt as often as not had epistemological reasons among their reasons for keeping anything metaphysical out of common sense beliefs and their analyses - there were to be no inexplicable intuitions. There is nothing mysterious in the manner in which certainties of common sense come to be certainties. The truths about the ordinary things which are the topics of ordinary beliefs are found out in the ordinary ways: by looking and listening, touching and handling, looking harder and moving up closer if there is some doubt whether a thing is what it seems to be, asking other people, and so on and so on. These familiar procedures of ordinary life give us the particular truths of common sense.

And there is the short way for establishing the general truths of common sense: We learn the common sense language of knowledge and doubt, of reality and illusion body and mind, cause and effect, of choice, of morality, by being introduced to situations in which it applies and shown how to apply it. The general truths of common sense are

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I. "....any expression which expresses the analysandum must be synonymous with any expression which expresses the analysans." This, Moore explains, is a condition of "analysis" as he has understood the word. (The Philosophy of Moore, p.663.)

guaranteed by the fact that there is an applicable language of common sense.

"We are apt to imagine that those who formed languages were no metaphysicians", Reid remarks[1] - wrongly in his opinion. But how very correct our supposition is on this view of the nature of common sense truths. More, however, than metaphysics has gone out of them when their truth is a truth that can be established linguistically. The thinness of their truth with this certification is in proportion to their incorrigibility, their incorrigibility in proportion to the approximation of the descriptive expressions in them to names; since the more descriptive they are , the more they say something about what they refer to, the more they risk being misdescriptions. I cannot ask someone whose name I know to be N, Are you really N or only called 'N'; his being called 'N' is his being N. If it is impossible to doubt, for instance, that there are independently existing material objects, because in order to know the meaning of the expression 'independently existing material object' one has had to be shown its application, then what it is impossible to doubt is that there are things called 'independently existing material objects'.[2]

If we cannot have a logical justification for the beliefs of common sense and leave any body to them, we can still have an empirical justification for them- with the implication that their content is purely phenomenal. If you are not convinced that it is, you can be given a priori assurances and perhaps deprived of speech to express your dissatisfaction. "Presumably what people mean must be confined to what they can mean."[3] And what they can mean can be limited by general principles; by Hume's principle of conceptual empiricism, by Russell's principle of acquaintance,[4] by the verification principle to eliminate undesirable acquaintances.

I. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. IV, p.441.
2 A.D. Woozley, "Ordinary Language And Common Sense", Mind, JulyI953.
3.A.S. Duncan-Jones, 'Does philosophy Analyse Common Sense?', Aristotelian Society Proceedings, Sup. Vol.XVI, p.I45.
4. "Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted."

The philosopher who has drawn boundaries for significant speech by allowing it only phenomenal reference has his opponent at a severe disadvantage. When you talk about the existence of unperceived material objects, about self-identity, free will ... you have to mean what he means when he talks about them, or mean nothing. On the other hand, he has to mean what you mean, for the same reason. And as he is afraid of being taken to mean what you do mean, he naturally finds himself saying what cannot be said, explaining what 'unperceived existence' does not mean, opposing a serial to a numerical self-identity and the 'liberty of spontaneity' to the 'liberty of indifference'. Phenomenalistic types of opinion in general are understood only by contrast with opposed views.

With his theory of how descriptive words come to have a meaning, Hume ought, even more than Berkeley, to have appeared in the role of a philosopher of common sense, scraping off the encrustations of metaphysical nonsense from the purity of its beliefs. He would have done so if he had not been Hume. The Treatise was intended to shock. And besides there was too much of Reid in Hume for him to fit comfortably into that role. The result is that when Berkeley and Hume consider their philosophies in relation to common sense, Hume seems old-fashioned compared with Berkeley.

No great changes are necessary in order to bring Hume up to date. All that has to be done is to make him consistent by making a few excisions. What people mean must be confined to what they can mean; what they can mean has been prescribed; the tension between the natural and universal beliefs of mankind and "philosophy" disappears - it depended on Hume's forgetfully allowing men to mean more than they could. Then some commonplaces on the language of impressions and ideas as being the language of analysis, and therefore not in competition with the language of common sense but a technical vocabulary to be used in its philosophical elucidation; and the absurdities which arise from the confusion of the two sorts

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of language referred back to their authors: Hume is no longer a paradoxical opponent of common sense but a philosopher with similar presuppositions to many twentieth century philosophers, engaged like them in its analysis, not denying or questioning the existence of material objects, self-identity, other minds or any of the things that common sense is unshakably convinced of; on the contrary, taking them for granted in order to tell us what they are.

The opposition between common sense statements and philosophical paradoxes is altogether illusory on this interpretation of the nature of philosophical paradox. There seemed to be an opposition of matter of fact statements to matter of fact statements. There is only one set of matter of fact statements, but these are stated in alternative languages; in ordinary language and in a technical language for its elucidation: and the same thing is said in both. The illusion of paradox arises when the technical language borrows ordinary words and uses them with new meanings, and they are understood by the reader or hearer in their ordinary meanings. And the illusion will be strengthened if in the course of philosophical elucidation a philosopher happens to do what Hume does not do; that is reject some metaphysical misinterpretation of a common sense statement with a verbal denial of a common sense statement. Free will, for instance is denied when what is meant is that indeterminism is false and no part of common sense belief.

There is another interpretation of the nature of philosophical paradox. On this other interpretation the paradoxes are again really linguistic and apparently factual, but this time really paradoxical. The Common Sense philosophers would have found either interpretation equally disconcerting.

Lord Russell said by implication - if one has not misunderstood him - that

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I. We learn from "Mr. Hume's philosophy" that "a succession of ideas and impressions may eat, and drink, and be merry". (Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, p.444

whenever anybody sees anything, what he sees is part of his own brain.[1] When Reid encountered an earlier version of this opinion, he rejected it as against common sense and empirically false. In Professor Malcolm's view it is against common sense and false, but not empirically false.

"Russell was not making an empirical statement. In the normal sort of circumstances in which a person would ordinarily say that he sees the postman, Russell would agree with him as to what the particular circumstances of the situation were. Russell would not disagree with him about any question of empirical fact; yet Russell would still say that what he really saw was not the postman but part of his own brain. It appears then that they disagree, not about any empirical facts, but about what language shall be used to describe those facts. Russell was saying that it is really a more correct way of speaking to say that you see a part of your brain, than to say that you see the postman."[2] And the reply to Russell that it is the postman and not part of our brain that we see, may be interpreted, Malcolm says, as meaning that it is correct language to say the first thing and quite incorrect to say the second. What makes the one way of speaking correct and the other incorrect cannot, on Malcolm's view, be the fact that it is the postman we see and not part of the brain, except in so far as this fact is identical with the fact that that particular thing is always called a 'postman' and never a 'part of the brain'.

Reid did not have to deal with a treatment of philosophical paradox as sophisticated as this, and his only direct contribution to its discussion is his reminder that it is on the face of it unplausible that a statement which purports to be about one thing, should actually be about another quite different thing. Unplausible, for instance, that statements which have every appearance of being about the right and wrong of conduct should really be about someone's feelings about

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1. Outline of Philosophy, Ch. XIII.
2. "Moore And Ordinary Language", The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, p.350.

conduct.[1] And that statements which are intended to be factual should instead be linguistic, has a similar initial unplausibility. For it is presumably not Malcolm's view that a philosopher in making some paradoxical assertion or other intends his assertion to be a linguistic one; he does not himself see through its factual disguise. And it can remain impenetrable to him no matter how much he is talked to. If a man says X and someone says to him, What you really mean is Y and he agrees, then Y no doubt is what he really means. But if he keeps insisting that Y is not what he means, then in an obvious sense of 'meaning' Y is not what he means. In what sense of the word does the paradoxical philosopher mean the sort of thing Malcolm asserts that he does if he denies that he does?

Supposing, however, that these apparently factual statements have been correctly construed as linguistic statements, they are more paradoxical than ever. In the sense in which correct language is the standard language we are taught to speak and in which we correct deviations from it,[2] no one who had learnt the language could deny that it is correct language to call the thing we always do call a 'postman' a 'postman'.

Why then would the paradoxical philosopher be saying that the ordinary language for describing the objects of perception is incorrect? His only reason for saying this would be that it incorrectly describes the facts. But since his factual comment has been cancelled, this reason is taken away from him. He is allowed to say that there is something wrong with ordinary language but not allowed to say why.

In the statement that we never see anything but some part of our own brain, ordinary words are run into such an extraordinary combination that no meaning comes through. There are, however, philosophical paradoxes which are worded i

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1. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p. 673.

2. ..."we should smile, and correct his language" (the child's who remarks to people sitting on chairs around the room, that it is "highly probable" there are chairs in the room). Malcolm, p.355.

intelligibly, and which are not linguistic assertions or recommendations, because they are either reasons for these, or because the philosopher is quite satisfied with ordinary language as it is and does not want to change it at all. A man with a phenomenalist doctrine might want to cut the word "permanent" out of our vocabulary because there is nothing for it to apply to. On the other hand, he may claim that there is nothing in the established usage of the word inconsistent with his doctrine. In neither case does the doctrine disappear into a linguistic proposal or assertion.

The question which has to be decided before it can be decided whether common sense has any philosophical opponents who reject any of its beliefs as false, meaningless or radically confused, is a general question about the content of common sense beliefs. Have these beliefs no more than a "phenomenal" content, if we may now use this word for want of another more widely than is customary; or do they also have, and again for want of a better word, something that might be called a "meta physical" content? (Almost any word would be a better word in Beattie's judgment; a "metaphysical" opinion is the kind of opinion to be found in Hume.)

The distinction marked by these words "phenomenal" and "metaphysical" should become sufficiently clear as we go along. In the meantime a rough indication of it can be given by asking whether common sense beliefs are beliefs which are wholly, or or beliefs which are not more than partially capable of empirical verification; whether the significance of the language in which they are expressed is exhausted by reference to what can fall under the senses and (the speaker's) introspection, or whether it goes beyond this to what these cannot reach.[1.] Thus the common sense belief in the existence of material things includes the belief in their existence at times when we are not perceiving them. And the statement that there is this and that in the attic specifies the things that could be seen and handled by anyone going into the attic. Does it say what is there whether anyone goes there or not? It does. Is being in the attic when no one is in the attic being able to be seen and handled by anyone going in to the attic (anyone not blind, sleep-walking....)? The ordinary language of personal identity;

1. Sooner or later speaking indiscriminately of common sense beliefs is bound to lead to difficulties, and it does so here. For with regard to at least one of these beliefs, the belief that the future can be anticipated from the past, the issue of a single or of a double content does not arise. It does not arise because of the high level of generality in the belief about the future. Whatever account we give of, say, the material things of past experience, we shall give the same account of the material things of future experience. But the belief would be a "metaphysical" belief, in the sense in which "metaphysical", is here being used, if we are driven back on to self-evidence for it.

is it exhausted in its inward reference by reference to the continuity of my experience and to feelings of being the "same person" when I use it of myself; and, when ypu use it of me, by reference to my public uniqueness? And again when I talk of other people's joys and griefs am I altogether speaking, as I ~~part~~ partly am, of their smiles and laughter, their hunched shoulders and wan faces, or also of what these "express"? It is against common sense to deny that we have free will. Is it against common sense to deny that we have free will in any sense in which it is not verifiably true that we have free will?

If there is nothing in the beliefs of common sense which is not verifiably true, if the language of common sense does not go beyond a phenomenal reference, the paradoxical philosophers of the past were not taking anything away from common sense. Their paradoxes were merely verbal and were designed to protest against their metaphysical opponents' (perhaps meaningless) addition to it, or were occasioned by the misleading language in which the analysis of its statements was conducted. These philosophers only seemed to be against common sense because they did not speak its language; either saying, or sounding as if they were saying, that there are no material things etc., but not meaningthat there are not, in any sense in which common sense believes that there are. If, however there is a metaphysical as well as a phenomenal level to the beliefs of common sense, and if consequently its language has a double reference, philosophers who hold the same views as their paradoxical predecessors are really against common sense though they speak its language.

What more is there to common sense beliefs than their empirically verifiable content? For this question to be answered in any detail, the beliefs would have to be taken one by one. This, however, can be said in general. Just what more may be a matter for philosophical elucidation.[I.] But philosophical elucidation is not needed equally in all these beliefs, and perhaps not at all for some of them.

I. Stewart mentions the wordlessness of the general beliefs of common sense in ordinary men. They are taken too much for granted ever to become explicit. No one but a philosopher would think of stating them to himself or anyone else. (Elements, VolII, Ch.I, Sec.I, p.37.)

The man who was asked what he meant 'by other people's feelings' would be puzzled to know what you meant by the question; asked what he meant when he said that the sea-chest is still in the attic when everyone is downstairs, he could be quickly puzzled to know what he meant. Was he saying that the thing is there looking the same when no one is about as when someone sees it? If so, he is soon hesitating. Or perhaps he is already acquainted with the philosophers or the popular physicists, and is sure that he did not mean anything so simple. What did he mean? Will he settle for the primary qualities without the secondary, or for atoms and electrons? Where does common sense say a final No to the whittling down of unperceived material objects from what they are when perceived? This has to be found out, if it can be found out; common sense does not have a prepared answer which it is waiting to compare with the results of the philosophical clarification of its belief. But this indeterminateness is not present in all common sense beliefs, and when it is present it may not be in their meatphysical aspect. The metaphysical notion of numerical self-identity is clear enough; even if it is unsatisfactory in other ways. The puzzle is to explain what one means by 'oneself' without reference to this notion.

"Who can doubt whether men have universally believed the existence of a material world... that every change that happens in nature must have a cause... that there is a right and a wrong in human conduct?"[I.] No one. And because all philosophers would give Reid's answer to his question, his question as it stands is too naive to have any philosophical point. Reid asked, however, though only half realizing it, a question about beliefs with a metaphysical content and got an answer about beliefs with a merely phenomenal content. Because the Common Sense philosophers only half-realized that there were the two levels in common sense beliefs, they mistook the doubts and denials of their truth at the metaphysical level for doubts and denials of their truth at the phenomenal level. But because

I. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. IV, p.440.

they half-realized it, they could not quite bring themselves to dismiss these questionings and rejections as intellectual make-belief or insane delusion.[1]

A philosopher asserts that there are no unperceived tables and chairs, defines the mental life of other people in terms of their actual and possible behaviour, thinks with Hume that he himself is a "bundle of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity".....You may call his position 'metaphysical lunacy', as Reid does,[2] but it would be polemically much more satisfactory if it could have been shown to be ordinary lunacy. And this it would have been if he had denied those truths of common sense in their phenomenal aspect; if, for example, every time he was shown a chair he was convinced that there was nothing there at all or anything but a chair; if, again, he was convinced that other people were mindless automata; if he was sure that he was no more the same person in the morning and in the evening than (as Beattie thinks Hume might as well have said) "Nero is the Man of Ross". If the philosopher accepts the beliefs of common sense in their phenomenal meaning, he will behave like other men, and without any inconsistency between theory and practice.

The Common Sense philosophers are always saying that one of the features which stamps a belief as a belief of common sense, stamps it with the mark of inescapable truth, is the fact that "even those who reject it in speculation, find themselves under a necessity of being governed by it in their practice".[3]

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1. Reid's and Stewart's misunderstanding was intermittent; Beattie's and Oswald's rarely falters. The following is typically Beattie and Oswald: "That we cannot do some things, but have it in our power to do others, is what no man in his senses will hesitate to affirm. I can take up my staff from the ground, but I cannot lift a stone of a thousand weight.... When a man asks me a question, I have it in my power to answer or be silent, ~~to answer or be silent,~~ to answer softly or roughly, in terms of respect or in terms of contempt. Frequent temptations to vice fall in my way; I may yield or I may resist. ...But this idea [of power] has had the misfortune to come under the examination of Mr. HUME..." (Immutable Truth Pt. II, Ch.II, Sec. III, pp. 294-295.)

2. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec. VII, p.127.

3. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, p.447.

An unfortunate criterion. Reid and his school are opposing a metaphysically loaded common sense to phenomenalism and to a version of common sense that would fit in with phenomenalism. Half in the dark about what they are doing, they adopt the phenomenalist criterion of meaning and truth as their criterion of the meaning and truth of the propositions of common sense. It is tautological that the phenomenal content of a belief is empirically verifiable, and tautological that empirical verification could not establish that a belief so much as had a metaphysical content. We shall indeed never open the door quick enough to catch tables and chairs snapping back into existence, or alternatively waiting for us with a continuous duration - a phenomenalist metaphysics is no more empirical than its contrary. But what the Common Sense philosophers had more formidably to reckon with is not a phenomenalistic metaphysics, but an interpretation of the beliefs of common sense that is not inconsistent with it, an interpretation of them as altogether metaphysically neutral, not going beyond phenomena either positively or negatively.

The beliefs of common sense, Reid says, are reflected in the structure of language, in its universal grammar. It is usually taken for granted that any opinion, whether true or false, can be expressed equally in any language which has sufficient words for the purpose. There is a most important exception to this general rule. "There are certain common opinions of mankind, upon which the structure and grammar of all languages are founded."[I.] All languages are recalcitrant to the expression of opinions which are at variance with these common opinions.

"Language is the express image and picture of human thoughts; and from the picture we may draw some certain conclusions concerning the original.

"We find in all languages the same parts of speech; we find nouns, substantive and adjective; verbs, active and passive, in their various tenses, numbers and

I. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.I, p.229.

moods. Some rules of syntax are the same in all languages.

"Now what is common in the structure of languages, indicates an uniformity of opinion in those things upon which the structure is grounded.

"The distinction between substances and the qualities belonging to them; between thought and the being that thinks; between thought and the objects of thought; is to be found in the structure of all languages. And, therefore, systems of philosophy, which abolish those distinctions, wage war with the common sense of mankind."[1]

It is not to the ordinary use of ordinary words that Reid is going for philosophical illumination here and elsewhere when he speaks in the same way; it is to supposedly common features of the grammar of all languages. "The philosophy of grammar, and that of human understanding, are more nearly allied than is commonly imagined."[2] The metaphysical doctrines of causation, of substance and its modifications and of the independence of the objects of cognition from cognition are in front of anyone who knows how to parse. Reid is not always so naive. "We can only expect in the structure of languages, those distinctions which all mankind in the common business of life have occasion to make."[3]

Beattie also wrote on universal grammar, but without looking for the confirmation of the metaphysical beliefs of common sense. We might compare, for instance, what he thought of the import of substantives with Reid's opinion. There must be substantives. "Men could not speak of one another, or of anything without substantives." A substantive is "a word denoting a substance"; or more properly is "a word denoting a thing spoken of". "Now the things we speak of either have a real existence, as man, tree, house, hatchet; or have had a real existence, as Babylon, Eden, Caesar; or are spoken of as if they had existed, or did exist, as Jupiter, Fairy, Lilliput; or are conceived by the mind as having at least the

1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.IV, p.440.
2. Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, Sec.V, p.692.
3. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.V, p.238.

capacity of being characterized by qualities, as virtue, beauty, motion, swiftness. Thus the structure of language allows us to speak of a quality as a "thing" and, since abstract nouns can take adjectives, as a thing that may be characterized by other qualities. And this, Beattie remarks, is very nearly the "description of a substance". Beattie does, however, doubt whether abstract nouns are essential parts of speech. Though they are found in every known language, they could perhaps always be dispensed with by circumstances.[1.]

Beattie's treatment of substantives is typical of his treatment of other features of universal grammar. Why is there a universal grammar? "Certain modes of human thought "are common to all men in the circumstances of human life. Universal grammar is the system of linguistic necessities for their expression.[2.]

We have already met instances and shall meet others of Reid's appeal to common language in philosophical discussion. The appeal is sometimes destructive and made in order to oppose a theory, not to oppose a theory to a theory, not even to put anything in place of a theory ("Let us next consider the proper meaning of the word impression in English, that we may see how far it is fit to express either the operations of the mind or their objects....") In this way it is an incident in Reid's argument against the theory of ideas. The appeal is sometimes made in order to oppose a conviction to a theory; the objectivity implicit in the language of morality, for instance, set against subjectivist theories of the nature of morality. And in some instances Reid is able to show some recalcitrance in common language to phenomenalist elucidation.[3.] But incidently; on Reid's view common language is the repositary of the metaphysics of common sense primarily in its structure rather than in its content.

If Reid is wrong about the nature of common sense beliefs why do ordinary people refuse to accept their phenomenalistic analyses? When told "This is the

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1. Dissertations, pp.323-324.
2. Dissertations, p.322.
3. There are anticipations of Reid in an isolated passage in Turnbull: "Such ways of speaking are of universal use and extent: none are more such: but to say that such phrases, received in all languages, and universally understood. have no meaning at all, is to assert an absurdity no less gross than this; that men may discourse, hold correspondence, and be influenced and determined in their correspondence with one another, without any ideas at all. Common language is built upon fact, or universal feeling.... It is only such philosophers, who seeking the knowledge of human nature, not from experience, but from I know not what subtle theories of their own invention, depart from common language, and therefore are not understood by others, and sadly perplex and involve themselves." (Principles of Moral Philosophy, p.16.)

sort of thing you really mean", why do they not say "Yes, that is the sort of thing I really mean", They have it patiently explained to them, for example, that the philosopher is not telling them that there are no tables; that on the contrary he is telling them what tables are They are unimpressed. They do not think that "There are tables and they are clusters of sensations" is any better than "There are no tables, only clusters of sensations". The phenomenalistic analyses are rejected by ordinary men as soon as they are proposed and understood and if they are suspected of being ~~phenalistic~~ phenomenalistic, before they are understood.

Perhaps not all with equal decision, at any rate after enough talk has been gone through. It depends on the clarity of the belief and the proportion between its two kinds of content. The exteriorization of other people's minds into their behaviour is rejected with complete scepticism; the unperceived material object survives perhaps as a nescio quid, clung to with puzzled stubbornness; and the phenomenalistic analyses of other common sense beliefs are turned down more or less emphatically and with a more or less definite feeling of what has been left out. If the Common Sense philosophers are right in holding that the metaphysical beliefs of common sense are self-evident, and in looking to the testimony of ordinary men to bear them out, they must be prepared to find disturbingly that, as far as the testimony goes, some of them might be more self-evident than others, certainly that it is clearer in some then in others what it is that is self-evident.

Let the beliefs of common sense be refused the possibility of a metaphysical content, and their truth can be withdrawn from philosophical dispute. Reid and his school will not accept their eirenicon. These beliefs cannot be freed from their metaphysical commitments and remain the beliefs of common sense. And their truth is not jeopardized by the weight they carry; no unloading is needed to make them safe. They are true as they are, and are known to be so, if not by all men, then by most men and by all men most of their time. Reid has no answer to the question "How do we know that they are true"? except that it is the kind of question that cannot always be asked if it is ever to answered. In the long run we are driven back to the constitution of our nature. The beliefs of common sense its unanswerable authority.

Sir James Mackintosh remarks that he observed to Dr. Brown in 1812 that Reid

and Hume "differed more in words than in opinion". Brown answered: "Yes, Reid bawled out, We must believe an outward world; but added in a whisper, we can give no reason for our belief. Hume cries out, We can give no reason for such a notion; and whispers, I own we cannot get rid of it."[I.]

I. Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, (2nd. edition) p.346.

CHAPTER IV [illegible] COMMON SENSE - (2)

'Reason and Common Sense'

"There is this difference", Priestley remarks, "between the antient and these modern sceptics [Reid and his school] , that the antients professed neither to understand nor believe any thing, whereas these moderns, believe every thing, though they profess to understand nothing."[I.] But there is a more dangerous scepticism in this "new and strange" appeal to common sense than the denial that reasons can be given for our natural and universal beliefs. That is bad; it is a sceptical credulity. What is worse is that these beliefs are drowned in subjectivity.

The "great doctrine of Mr Locke" - the doctrine that truth is a matter of the agreements and disagreements between ideas - made "truth to depend upon the necessary nature of things, to be absolute, unchangeable, and everlasting". The doctrine of common sense makes it depend upon "the arbitrary constitution of our nature" and so ~~on~~ to be "a thing that is relative to ourselves only". Beattie called his book an Essay on the Immutability of Truth, but he says in it that we know nothing of the "eternal relations of things". He says that we know no more of truth and falsehood than that "our constitution determines us in some cases to believe, in others to disbelieve; and that to us is truth which we feel that we must believe, and that to us is falsehood which we feel that we must disbelieve."[2.] Truth has entirely gone, Priestley comments, with the renunciation of its objectivity. We are left by Beattie with how things appear to us and are never to know how they are in themselves - "which alone is strictly speaking the truth" - when we are told by Beattie that "we can only see with our own eyes, and judge by our own faculties".

Beattie does not break with his school in the matter. Reid and Oswald also

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2. Immutable Truth, Pt. II, Ch. I, Sec.II, p.196.
I. Examination, Preface, p.XXI.

significantly call their final authority for truth 'sense', a term which philosophers have kept for "those faculties in consequence of which we are liable to feelings relative to ourselves only, and from which they have not pretended to draw any conclusions concerning the nature of things". The system of common sense puts feeling in the place of reason and therefore relative in the place of absolute truth.[1]

Priestley's strictures will form a convenient text for the exposition that will occupy this section. We shall begin with the fundamental disagreement between Priestley and the Common Sense philosophers on the nature of sense.

Priestley's mistake, in Reid's opinion, is the general mistake of philosophers, and the whole point of the Inquiry was to correct it. Feelings relative to ourselves, and from which no conclusions can be drawn as to the nature of things, is what sense perception, construed according to the theory of ideas, leaves us with. On that theory from sense we have sensations and nothing else, nothing that takes us out of ourselves. And when philosophers have recognized other senses besides the external senses, a moral sense, for instance, their interpretation of them is the same; feelings are what we have by them and nothing else. Reid does not use the word 'sense' the way the philosophers use it; he uses it as it is used in common speech where it "always implies judgment", where 'good sense' is 'good judgment', 'nonsense' 'absurd judgment', where colours and sounds are 'judged' by the eye, and so on. From which "it is natural to think that common sense should mean common judgment; and so it really does."[2] And equally natural, in Reid's opinion, for one holding that the sole province of sense is to provide us with sensations or ideas, to infer that the sole province of judgment is to perceive their relations. Not accepting the premiss, Reid does not accept the conclusion.

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1. Examination, pp.123 ff.
2. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. II, p.423.

Sense (unless disordered) and common sense, through the judgment involved in them, do not leave us locked up within ourselves; they efface us so thoroughly that they prsent us with things as they would be even if we personally did not exist.

Beattie offers a formal definition of common sense. It is "that power of the mind which perceives truth, or ~~common~~ compels belief, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible impulse; derived neither from education nor from habit, but from nature; acting independently on our will, whenever its object is presented, according to an established law, and therefore properly called Sense; and acting in a similar manner upon all, or at least upon a great majority of mankind, and therefore properly called Common Sense."[1]

How would this definition suit the other Common Sense philosophers? Oswald would be very happy with it, and there is not a great deal in it for Reid to object to. He would not care to authorize without qualification the instantaneity and irresistibility of the operation of common sense - like opening your eyes and there it is - even though he himself says that the propositions of common sensesense are believed as soon as understood. There are obstructions to common sense, other than congenital defect, which are not paralleled in the external senses which Beattie is taking as his model. Understanding the propositions of common sense is more than understanding the words of the sentences in which they are stated; they have to be viewed in "their proper light". Reid does not explain this remark, and of course the fact is that if being viewed in their proper light means having their real meaning understood, and if Reid is right about the nature of their real meaning, if they have a metaphysical as well as a phenomenal content, then the only philosophers who will dissent from their truth are some of those who have understood them. Reid probably intended by the

1. Immutable Truth, Pt. I, Ch.I, p.45. There is nothing "new and strange" in the appeal to common sense, Beattie remarks in his Hints for an Answer to Dr.Priestley (Aberdeen MS B45); it is "as old as literature, as old as human nature itself".

remark to summarize the sort of thing he elsewhere says in detail: A sufficient schooling in sceptical philosophy can reduce the otherwise irresistible pressure of common sense belief to a fitful insistence, and there are powerful intellectual motives for the philosophical invention of scepticism, notably the determination to leave nothing unexplained and to adopt explanatory hypotheses with unexpectedly destructive consequences. It is obvious that Beattie would agree or he would not have written his book.

Beattie's account of common sense in the passage in which he defines it is "censurable in almost every line", Stewart asserts.[I.] To begin with, the affected precision of definition is quite out of place. "The very idea, indeed, of appealing to common sense, virtually implies that these words are to be understood in their ordinary acceptation, unrestricted and unmodified by any technical refinements and comments." Stewart's main criticism is that Beattie not only supposes that 'common sense' means "something quite distinct from reason, but something which bears so close an analogy to the powers of external sense, as to be not improperly called by the same name". How much more unexceptionably Reid speaks of common sense when he speaks of it as that "degree of sense" in virtue of which we are "capable of managing our own affairs" and of being "answerable for our conduct to others"; when he explains that it is "called common sense because it is common to all men with whom we can transact business"; when he adds that the same degree of understanding "which equips a man for the business of life, makes him capable of discerning what is true and what is false in matters that are self-evident and which he distinctly understands". Stewart does not notice that the philosophical opponents of the truths of common sense have been defined into madness. And wishing to stress Reid's view of common sense as an energy of the understanding, he passes over Reid's agreement with Beattie that it is also rightly thought of as a sense when sense is rightly thought of.

I. Elements, Vol. II, Ch. I, pp.63-69.

However comparatively unexceptionable Reid's language is, the whole appeal to 'common sense' is, in Stewart's opinion, most unfortunately worded. The appeal is in fact to the "fundamental laws of belief", and it is not part of the function of what is ordinarily called 'common sense' to authorize these. "The phrase Common Sense, as it is generally understood, is nearly synonymous with mother-wit ..... and refers, not to the speculative convictions of the understanding, but to that prudence and discretion which are the foundation of successful conduct." [1] Reid, admittedly with some precedent from other philosophers, turned the everyday expression 'common sense' into a technical term by giving it a meaning which it does not have in ordinary language, by making it mean the faculty which has self-evident truth as its province. A regrettable consequence, Stewart remarks, of this change in its meaning is that 'Common Sense' too easily became a school label, under which wide differences of opinion disappeared, and independent thinkers were made responsible for each other's doctrines. And even more regrettably, all of them (at least to "title-page readers") seemed from the associations of the word, to be lining themselves up on the side of the vulgar whenever the vulgar were against the learned. [2]

It is not certain that Stewart is right in thinking that Reid was using 'common sense' with a new meaning. Like the word 'idea', 'common sense' was a philosopher's word, at any rate a learned word, before it became everybody's word. Without actually speaking of a 'faculty' of common sense, Reid uses the word 'common sense' with a faculty reference, and also in reference to a set of beliefs or principles.

After first translating the Latin translation of Aristotle's technical term and so beginning with a meaning that had no connection with its later meaning, 'common sense', in its faculty reference became one of the vague synonyms for

1. "Life of Reid", Reid's Collected Works, p.28.
2. Elements, Vol.II, Ch. I, Sec.III, pp.67-69; Life of Reid, p.28.

intelligence. Then moving into the vernacular it came to signify average intelligence (allowing the depreciatory 'mere common sense') and also practical sagacity, settling down to this as its most familiar meaning when it refers to mental endowment. An Oxford Dictionary citation of an early eighteenth century writer shows how little it has changed since then: "By a man of common sense we mean one who knows, as we say, chalk from cheese". There does not seem to be much sanction for Reid's opinion that 'common sense' is the proper name for the faculty which has first principles as its province.

In Reid, the principles "which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them .... are what we call the principles of common sense; and what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd".[1] We are now more accustomed in everyday speech to the usage by which if something is a 'matter of common sense' it is the obviously sensible thing to do. Alternatively, it is an obvious inductive inference, and what is against common sense is an inductive absurdity. This is not new. Coleridge defined the 'common sense of a people' as "the movable index of its average judgment and information".[2] But 'common sense' has more that one meaning when it means a set of beliefs. And in Reid's time there was not, any more than there is now, a break with established usage in speaking of philosophical paradoxes as against common sense, and of the beliefs opposed to them as common sense beliefs. It, or something near it is a way of speaking to be found in ~~Locke,~~ Berkeley and Hume,[3] and behind the English word, the Latin sensus communis has an approximately Reidian meaning among its meanings.

Stewart wants the intellectual power which Reid calls 'common sense' called 'reason' - as a matter of linguistic propriety. He is not preparing a quick

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1. Inquiry, Ch. II, Sec. VI, p.108.
2. Aids to Reflection, 10th. Aphorism on Spiritual Religion.
3. ~~Locke, Essay Bk.I, Ch.III, Sec.IV;~~ Berkeley, Three Dialogues, pass.; Hume, Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Sec.I.

destruction for the philosophical opponents of common sense. But if there was a man whose behaviour revealed a disbelief in his own existence, in his self-identity, in the reality of the things round about him, it would not be good English to say that he had no common sense. We would say that he had lost his reason. And the appeal to common sense has an older and more venerable wording as the "appeal to the light of human reason from the reasonings of the schools".[1]

In the Inquiry Reid had spoken as if there could be an opposition between reason and common sense in which one would have to yield to the other: common sense "declines the tribunal of reason;" if Reason "will not be the servant of Common Sense she must be her slave".[2] In the Intellectual Powers Reid has come to realize that this is not the way to speak. (It never was more than a way of speaking: God gave us our reason and our common sense; the opposition was between common sense and misused reason.) Reason and common sense go together in nature as they do in the phrase. Reason has two functions, an intuitive function and a deductive function. 'Common sense' is an alternative name for reason in its intuitive function.[3] Indeed all the the Common Sense philosophers, except Beattie who follows the earlier Reid in keeping the word 'reason' for 'reasoning', are sooner or later willing or anxious to use 'common sense' and 'reason' interchangeably. Oswald is at some pains to make it clear that 'feeling' will not do as a substitute for 'common sense', because feelings ought to be disciplined by reason, and because to exalt feeling in this way would be to give a licence to bigotry.[4]

Stewart objects to the bundling up (sometimes by Reid, always by Beattie) of mathematical and metaphysical (and moral) axioms, particular truths derived from perception, memory and consciousness, along with the general principles of common sense into a single class of intuitive truths referable to a single principle of

1. Elements, Vol. II, Ch. I, P.50.
2. Ch.V, Sec.VII, p.127.
3. VI, Ch.II, p.425.
4. An Appeal to Common Sense on behalf of Religion. Vol I, pp.131-142.

our constitution.[1]

Where Reid writes 'common sense', Stewart writes 'reason'. Stewart does not obliterate 'distinct species of intuitive evidence' with the word 'reason' and Reid does not with the word 'common sense'. (Beattie clumsily follows Reid.) In a way Reid does obliterate the significance of distinct species of evidence and just because he is convinced that they are completely distinct. Logicians have tried by analyzing the different kinds of evidence to find out some common feature in them in virtue of which they are evidence. The Schoolmen sought it under the name of the criterion of truth. There have been many suggestions. Descartes' is the most celebrated. Reid does not understand what Descartes meant by 'clarity' and 'distinctness', and the more he considers the different knids of evidence the less he can see that they have anything in common, except this that "they are all fitted by Nature to produce belief in the human mind, some of them in the highest degree, which we call certainty, others in various degrees according to circumstances."[2]

The evidence of perception, memory and consciousness and of the other modes of cognition is in each case unique. What Reid calls 'the first principles of contingent truths' are generalizations of the particular evidence of perception, memory and of the other modes of cognition concerned with matters of fact. The first principles of contingent truth have nothing in common with each other except that they are all self-evident; and the first principles of contingent truth have nothing in common with the 'first principles of necessary truths' except self-evidence.[3]

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1. Life of Reid, p.27.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XX, p.328.
3. The distinction between necessary and contingent truths, Reid explains (Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch. V, p.442) coincides nearly, but not quite, with the well-known distinction between 'abstract' truths and 'matter of fact' truths. The law of contradiction is a necessary truth; that other people exist, a contingent truth; but that God exists is a necessary truth.

Nothing in the published writings of the Common Sense philosophers makes it quite clear whether any of them recognized that some of the principles they regarded as necessary have self-contradictory contradictories and some do not. Without explicitly marking the logical distinction between the two knids of truth they keep them confused. It is quite clear that they would not have thought that the logical distinction between them was epistemologically disturbing. Their view would have been that we can say why the contradictories of one sort of necessary proposition are impossible, and we cannot say whythe contradictories of the other sort are impossible, but we can see - unless our intelligence is in some way impaired - that the contradictories of both sorts are equally impossible.

Hamilton remarks that the distinction between the analytic and synthetic necessary truths is to be found in George Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric and that it attracted Stewart's attention.[1] (Stewart had also read Kant with dislike incomprehension.) Both Reid and Stewart of course knew Campbell's book well. Campbell defended Reid against Priestley, assented to the philosophy of common sense in general and developed it in this particular, if Hamilton is not mistaken. In Campbell's view mathematical propositions are "identical" propositions, but not tautologies. 4 and I are 5 is not like 5 is 5. In the arithmetical proposition the number 5 appears in the subject and predicate in different aspects (divided in the subject, single in the predicate), whereas in the tautology the subject is sterilely repeated in the predicate. Mathematical propositions differ in kind though not in superior evidence from the intuitive principles of common sense. The difference is that "no conclusions concerning actual existence" can be drawn from a mathematical proposition.[2] The principle of causation is unique

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1. Reid's Collected Works, Note A, p.788.
2. Cp. Reid: "....from no mathematical truth can we deduce the existence of anything; not even of the objects of the science." (Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, p.442-.

among the principles of common sense in that its denial is "not only false but contradictory".[1] Reid and Stewart had nothing to learn in this matter from Campbell. Stewart was interested in his account of the nature of mathematical propositions, not in his comparison between them and the propositions of common sense.[2]

At some time or other Reid came to recognize clearly the formal distinction between the two ~~kinds~~ kinds of truths which he regarded as equally necessary. McCosh printed in an appendix to his Scottish Philosophy fragments of several papers of Reid's. One of them(it was undated but seemed to be early) ends with a question and answer. "Q. Is there not a difference between the evidence of some first principles and others? A. There are various differences perhaps. This seems to be one, that, in some first principles, the predicate of the proposition is evidently contained in the subject: it is in this, two and three are equal to five; a man has flesh and blood. In these and the like self-evident principles, the subject includes the predicate in the very notion of it. There are other first principles in which the predicate is not contained in the notion of the subject; as, where we affirm that a thing which begins to exist must have a cause. Here the beginning of existence and causation are really different notions, nor does the first include the last. ..... The truth of principles of the first ~~knid~~ kind is only perceiving some part of the definition of a thing to belong to it,..."

When Reid and Stewart say that common sense beliefs have their source in reason, or that their denial goes against reason, they think they are saying (and Stewart is especially clear about this) something linguistically correct. They do not delude themselves into thinking that they are giving a reason for these beliefs, let alone the best of reasons. So far from thinking that, they regard it as one of the marks of a common sense belief that nobody asks a reason for it.

1. The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Vol.I, Bk.I, Ch.V, pp. 105-113 (1776 edition)
2. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.I, Sec.I, pp. 26-30.

Ordinary men who want reasons where they can be given do not ask for them when they cannot be given and are not needed. They do not want to have it proved to them that they exist and are the same persons from hour to hour or that other people besides themselves exist. They do not want any of these matters about which there is no doubt put beyond doubt by arguments. It has been the vice of philosophers, in Reid's opinion, to want this. And once proof is insisted on and never found, it is hardly possible not to begin questioning the most obvious things. The only way to resolve a Cartesian doubt with regard to them is to draw back out of it. To hope to go through with it and emerge by reasoning is sophisticated credulity. It is trying to make more evident what is already as evident as it can be and from premises that are arbitarily privileged. But philosophers have not been willing to take the only way out with its rebuke to philosophical pride, and so to them the history of failed demonstrations tells against the truth of common sense beliefs when it ought to tell against the attempt to demonstrate it. Reid and Beattie are never tired of demonstrating that demonstration must proceed from indemonstrable premisses. The first principles from which demonstations proceed shine with the light of an unborrowed truth. As we shall see later it is Reid's conviction (and Beattie's from him) that the principles of common sense are not only indemonstrable but premisses.

If the truths of common sense are self-evident; how can there be any dissent from them? To answer this question is the first of two most difficult problems for the philosophy of Common Sense. Part of the explanation has just been given. The unsatisfied demand for demonstration casts a shadow of doubt over the truths of common sense. More importantly, the logic of the theory of ideas adopted unsuspectingly as an explanatory hypothesis, has driven philosophers into a rejection of common sense. And the sheer dislike of a multiplicity of inexplicable principles is important. To recognize the principles of common sense as self-evident is to

acquiesce in this multiplicity. The whole tendency of modern philosophy is against such an acquiescence, a revolution, Reid remarks, against the extravagance with which the ancient philosophy dealt in first principles.[1] In the new economy (impossibly down to one principle in Descartes, grudgingly supplemented by his successors) whatever is not open to deductive explanation and is not inductive generalization is due for psychological explanation. And there is no deduction or induction of the truths of common sense.

In Beattie's opinion, the philosophers who reject the self-evident truths of common sense impose on themselves and others with 'meaningless' and 'ambiguous' words. In Beattie 'meaningless' is an expletive, and the snaring ambiguities he mentions are so grossly obvious - for example 'sight' is a word with a subjective sense and an objective sense and idealism reads the subjective sense into the objective sense - that it is hard to imagine how anyone could hope to trap others in them, let alone be trapped himself.[2] Still it is a fact that Beattie had the idea that philosophical paradoxes were rooted in the ambiguities of common speech, even if it was an idea that he was not able to do anything with.

All that the Common Sense philosophers have to offer in further explanation of the mystery of dissent from self-evident truth is that those who cannot see it, when the difficulties have been cleared out of the way, lack the capacity to see it. And in calling this a lack of 'common sense' or of 'reason' they obscured from themselves how disturbingly particular the privation is. It is obviously not the absence of the same degree of understanding as equips a man for the ordinary business of life, in which Hume and Reid get on equally well. Nor is it a defect in reason or intelligence which has any other manifestation than this single one of an inability to see the metaphysical truths of common sense.

The first of the two problems for the philosophy of common sense is to

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.VII, p.462 ff.
2. Immutable Truth, Pt. II, Ch.II, Sec.I, p.251 ff.

explain how dissent from the self-evident truths of common sense is possible. The second is to provide some reason for thinking that in spite of this dissent they are self-evident - evident in themselves, truths which do not need any outside justification and which therefore ought to be assented to as soon as understood - some reason for thinking that their self-evidence is not merely evidence to oneself and to numbers of other people. The truths of common sense are as a matter of fact self-evident to all sensible and reasonable men, Reid and Stewart have been saying, and this would be a reason for thinking that they are so in themselves, that their truth ought to be universally acknowledged, if there was some mark of a sensible and reasonable man other than the fact that he is a man to whom the truths of common sense are self-evident.

The Common Sense philosophers cannot be asked to demonstrate that the propositions of common sense are self-evident. That is a contradictory demand. There is no contradiction in demonstrating that a proposition cannot be denied without self-contradiction, but the propositions of common sense are not logically necessary truths. The only proof there could be that the propositions of common sense are evident in themselves is their evidence to people. The Common Sense philosophers can be asked to explain why these propositions are not self-evident to everybody. They try to explain this. They can be asked to dispose of explanations of the origin of common sense beliefs which explain away their appearance of self-evidence. They do not try to do this. They can be asked to show such a massive suffrage in favour of the intrinsic self-evidence of the propositions of common sense that it will be more likely that those who cannot see it cannot see what is there, than that those who claim to see it, 'see' what is not there. The Common Sense philosophers are very ready to do this.

If the propositions of common sense are not assented to by everybody who understands them, they are assented to by nearly everybody who understands them.

And this is a good reason for thinking that they really are self-evidently true, for why should almost everyone think that they are unless they are?

"In a matter of common sense, every man is no less a competent judge than a mathematician is in a mathematical demonstration; and there must be a great presumption that the judgment of mankind, in such a matter, is the natural issue of those faculties which God has given them. Such a judgment can be erroneous only when there is some cause of the error, as general as the error is. When this can be shewn to be the case, I acknowledge it ought to have its due weight. But, to suppose a general deviation from truth among mankind in things self-evident, of which no cause can be assigned, is highly unreasonable."[1.]

There is a proper and an improper place for the appeal to the many against the few and this is a proper place. This is where the consensus gentium is to be invoked against idiosyncrasy, If the decision on the self-evident truth of the propositions of common sense was a matter "beyond the reach of common understanding", or a matter of being in a position to make recondite observations, the voice of mankind would have no authority abainst the expert. Where the expert and the ordinary man are on a level, as they are here, this authority is final. We are not dealing here, Stewart adds, with what may turn out to be a nearly universal prejudice which is due to a misreading of the facts. The denial of one of the fundamental beliefs of the human mind is not something that we may find in time to be like the denial that the sun moves round the earth. It is like the denial that there is motion at all.[2.]

And the authority of the consent of ages and nations is all the more final, since the philosopher who questions or denies the truths of common sense is a man divided against himself, saying one thing and acting out another, with conflicting professional and unprofessional opinions, and almost certainly also

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.IV, p.440.
2. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.I, Sec. III, pp.61-62.

inconsistent in his professional opinions. For it is the fate of the philosophers who reject some of the beliefs of common sense to find themselves in spite of themselves, accepting others on its bare authority. Thus they will perhaps allow that memory can be veracious, though when asked for their reasons they have none, every attempt to prove the veracity of memory presupposing it. Or they will confidently expect the course of nature to remain the same, with no better justification. At least they can be depended upon not to call in question the deliverances of "consciousness". If I am asked to prove that my inner life is not all mere seeming, I do not know where to look for the premisses. The principle that consciousness does not deceive us has the characteristic marks of a principle of common sense, certainty and indemonstrability.

Apart from the special difficulty (whether there is any logical room for the distinction between appearance and reality in the "objects of consciousness") at the end of the argument, Reid's appeal as a whole to the world against the philosopher and to the philosopher against himself is altogether too easy. If the question was about common sense beliefs in their phenomenal content, this appeal would be entirely successful and unnecessary. But very few of the philosophers who disown common sense beliefs in their metaphysical content admit so obligingly as Hume that they are rejecting natural and universal beliefs of mankind and that they keep their scepticism for the study.

The beliefs of common sense are not to be sheltered from examination; everything that can be said against them ought to be heard. To put forward any belief as a belief of common sense is in fact to invite its thorough discussion. Is it a belief of common sense or of prejudice aping common sense? Is it a belief which all or nearly all men regard as self-evident and find irresistible, a belief which governs the practice of anyone professing to deny it, a belief for which no universal cause of error can be discovered to match its universality? These

criteria sift the beliefs of common sense from their counterfeits.[1]

The appeal to common sense, critics of the philosophy of Common Sense have traditionally said, is an appeal from the learned to the vulgar. It is, Reid and Stewart say, an appeal from some of the learned to the rest of mankind on matters and only on matters in which superior understanding gives no additional competence, and an appeal from the theory to the practice of the dissidents, from their extraordinary to their ordinary beliefs. The discussion it ends is a discussion of the truth of common sense beliefs, no other discussion, and not a discussion whether or not a belief is a belief of common sense. Beattie would subscribe to all this, at least verbally, though he plainly thinks that it would have been better if there had never been any philosophy. Oswald stands aside from the other Common Sense philosophers when it comes to the limitations of common sense. Oswald thinks that nothing is too hard for common sense, Priestley remarks. In theology alone, it can establish the principles of natural religion, dissolve the pretentions of the Catholic Church, even settle disputed questions on "the divinity of Christ, atonement, the new birth, and predestination, with other smaller matters".[2]

"You ask, why I believe what is self-evident? I may as well ask, why you believe what is proved? Neither question admits of an answer; or rather, to both questions the answer is the same, namely, Because I must believe it." The nature of the necessity? "We are convinced by a proof, because our constitution is such, that we must be convinced by it: and we believe a self-evident axiom, because our constitution is such that we must believe it."[3] And Reid says very often that the belief in the truths of common sense is forced upon us by the constitution of our natu re. When Reid and Beattie speak in this way, what they

1. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.II, p.234; VI, Ch. IV, p.439ff.
2. Examination, p. 298.
3. Beattie, Immutable Truth, Pt. I, Ch. II, Sec.I, pp. 61-62.

are doing is exchanging the half logical, half psychological language of self-evidence for the wholly psychological language of compulsory belief. That is all they are doing; saying the same thing over again in different words, the second time as finally as they can. They are not putting forward a relativism by which the principles of common sense are categories of the mind imposed upon a wholly secret noumenal reality, ways in which we have to think of things (bedause we are made that way), but perhaps no more than that, perhaps with no correspondence to the nature of things.

If from the constitution of my nature I must believe that the principles of common sense are true, I cannot believe that this belief may be the arbitrary effect of the constitution of my nature. The belief that it dictates to me the truths of common sense is the belief that it dictates their truth. As Priestley says the truth of things is the way they are, not how they appear to us. And as Beattie says, to believe that you have the truth is to believe that your opinion would not alter if you were "perfectly acquainted with every thing in the universe."[1] To believe therefore that you have the truth from the constitution of your nature, involves the belief on its authority in its own cognitive transparency, is incompatible with an agnostic reserve towards the objectivity of its dictates. There is, however, a standing invitation to both relativism and tautology in assertions that the constitution of our nature determines our beliefs and disbeliefs. It is too much to expect that Beattie, at any rate, would altogether decline it, and he can move from relativism to tautology within a sentence: We know nothing of "the eternal relations and fitnesses of things" - in the only relevant meaning here, nothing of how they are in themselves as distinct from how they seem to us to be....."that to us is truth which we feel we must believe" - we must believe what we must believe; for Beattie is not defining truth as 'what

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1. Immutable Truth, Pt I, Ch. I, p34.

we must believe', since he goes on to admit that we can be wrong when we are sure we are right.[1]

In a rough paper Reid has discussed the ambiguity in the reference of the truths of common sense to the constitution of our nature: "It is one thing to say such a truth depends upon my constitution; it is another thing to say that my perception of that truth depends on my constitution .... Why do I believe first principles? ....One philosopher says, Because I am so constituted that I must believe them. This, say some, is the only possible reason that can be given for the belief of first principles. But, say others, this is a very bad reason; it makes truth a vague thing which depends on constitution. Is not this the ancient sceptical system of Heraclitus, that man is the measure of truth, that what is true to one man may be false to another? How shall we judge of this of this controversy? Answer, This question admits of two meanings. I. For what reason do you believe first principles? 2. To what cause is your belief of first principles to be ascribed? ....To first, evidence is the sole and ultimate ground of belief, and self-evidence is the strongest possible ground of belief.... If I should be asked what is the cause of our perceiving evidence in first principles, to this I can give no other answer but that God has given us the faculty of judgment or common sense."[2]

The relativism of which Priestley accused Reid and Beattie would be in Reid's eyes a peculiarly absolute form of the theory of ideas. It is in this ambiguity, at least, with regard to this matter that Hamilton breaks with Reid's school. "We know nothing absolute - nothing existing absolutely, that is, in and for itself, and without relation to us and our faculties."[3] The question is whether this 'great axiom' of Hamilton's, the Relativity of Human Knowledge is not the triviality that Beattie's 'relativism' becomes at the end of Priestley's exposition of

1. Immutable Truth, Pt. II, Ch.I, Sec.II, p.196.
2. McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy, pp. 474-475.
3. Lectures on Metaphysics, Vol.I, p.136.

it - "we can only see with our own eyes, and judge with our own faculties".

Part of what Hamilton means by the relativity of knowledge is not trivial in this sense. He holds with Reid and Stewart that behind the observable characteristics of matter and mind lie the impenetrably mysterious "substances"[I.] of matter and mind. We know that these substances exist because we know that without them their observable characteristics could not exist. Extension, figure and magnitude...., thought, feeling and desire are called 'characteristics', 'attributes', 'properties' or by some other adjectival name to mark their clear dependence on metaphysical substances. We know also from the mutual incompatibility of the two sorts of characteristics that matter and mind do not coincide in substance. Reid, Stewart and Hamilton speak of this wholly oblique knowledge of substance as a relative knowledge of it.

What does Hamilton want us to understand by the general axiom of relativity? He makes the answer more difficult by pointing to concealed substance and revealed attributes as its standard exemplification. And there is no connection at all between the axiom and what is supposed to be its exemplification. The relativity in the axiom is a relativity to our faculties of cognition, with some implications of subjectivity. The relativity in our knowledge of substance is the fact that substance is not known otherwise than relatively to its attributes. There are no implications of subjectivity.

The clearly untautological formulations of the axiom are extremely rare. Still they occur: "We can know, we can conceive, only what is relative. Our knowledge of <u>qualities</u> or <u>phenomena</u> is necessarily relative; for these exist only as they exist in relation to our faculties."[2.] And they would be sufficient

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I. Reid, nearly if not always, avoids using the word 'substance' of the mind and Stewart hates its barbarity. It makes, he says, true statements sound like nonsense and conjures up the physical imagery that is always a threat to the philosophy of the mind. 'Being' is a better word. It would be better still "to avoid, by the use of the pronoun <u>that</u> any substantative whatever, Mind is <u>that</u> which thinks, wills, etc. (<u>Dissertation</u>, p. 542.) I48.

2. <u>Reid's Collected Works</u>, p.323, Cp. <u>Lectures on Metaphysics</u>, Vol.I, pp.6I, I46, ∧

to determine the interpretation of the ambiguous formulations as significantly relativistic (since we can hardly suppose that a philosopher could be seized with the urgency of insisting and insisting that everything that is known by us is known by us), if it was not that with the axiom significantly relativistic, Hamilton's philosophy would be split into two contradictory halves. For no doctrine is more reiterated by Hamilton than the doctrine that in perception the mind is face to face with things outside it, nothing whatever coming between it and them. In its typical statement: "The external reality constitutes the immediate and only object of perception".[1] It is the common sense doctrine of perception and therefore Hamilton's own, and he is always watching for Reid's deviations from it.

"Yet commenting on Reid's opinion that the senses disclose the nature of the primary qualities as they are "in themselves", but give us merely a "relative" notion of the secondary qualities, informing us only that "they are qualities that affect us in a certain manner - that is produce in us a certain sensation",[2] Hamilton remarks: "Reid cannot mean that the former are known to us absolutely and in themselves - that is, out of relation to our cognitive faculties; for he elsewhere admits that all our knowledge is relative". It is not possible to guess what passage Hamilton thought contained Reid's admission. Reid uses the notion of "relativity" in three connections: in connection with the secondary qualities of bodies in the way just mentioned, in connection with substance in the way explained above, and in connection with power - power is known only relatively to its effects.[3]

The critics and expositors of Hamilton have dealt with this remarkable inconsistency in different fashions. Mill's inclination is to reduce the axiom of relativity to a truism.[4] Hutcheson Stirling brings the relativism and the

1. ~~Discussions~~ Dissertations, p.58.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XVII, p.313.
3. Active Powers, I, Ch.I, p. 314.
4. Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, Ch. III.

"natural realism" into head-on collision.[1] The Hamiltonians Mansel[2] and Veitch[3] relativize the objects of perception: They are phenomena, joint products of the mind and of another reality which they screen off from the mind. But they are "objective" phenomena and "material", not "subjective representations" of material things. Reid would have had some difficulty in understanding this, but he could have made out enough to recognize "ideas" in yet another of their chameleon variations.

2. Philosophy and the Philosophy of Common Sense

"This universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy." - Hume.

"Philosophy hath no other foundations than the principles of common sense"-- Reid.

Reid does not speak at great length of the functions of a philosophy of common sense, but it is clearly his opinion that there are two things that it has to do. The first is to refute assertions such as this of Hume's and to account for their plausibility. The gestures against reason at the beginning of the Inquiry were gestures. Reid never had any doubt that nothing could be more serious than that reason could be found to be against common sense. And he never for a moment thought that this schism in nature, if it was there, could be plastered over by calling 'common sense' 'reason'. It is a characteristic mark of common sense beliefs that we cannot give them up even if we cannot refute objections to them. Nevertheless to refute objections to them is what the Common Sense philosopher exists for. The second work of the philosophy of common sense is to establish Reid's assertion and to show how philosophy is to be built upon

1. Sir William Hamilton, pp. 2-10.
2. The Philosophy of the Conditioned
3. Hamilton, Chs. VI and VII.

the foundation of common sense.

The philosophy of common sense is to make itself unnecessary. Its present necessity is a misfortune. It is not valuable as a search after truth; it has made no positive discoveries and will make none. It is not even a school of instruction in other people's discoveries, for its claim is that the truths in which it is interested have always been known and are indeed momentous platitudes. Some of them might need a little clarification and precision of statement, but that is not a task which could absorb all the powers of a philosopher. And without any metaphysical impulse to discover new truths, it is without any epistemological concern to justify the truths that are as old as human nature. They need no justification and none is possible. The philosophy of common sense is called for only because these platitudes have been attacked and should be defended. Its philosophical value is polemical. Its best hope is to become with the attack on common sense an episode in man's intellectual history. Something like this would be Reid's estimate of his philosophy from one point of view, and from that point of view something like it must be a correct estimate, if Reid's views on the nature of common sense truth are correct.

Reid believes, however, that in defending common sense he is defending philosophy also. In attempting to destroy common sense it was also destroying itself. In that enterprise it is contemptible and to be cried out against. "I despise Philosophy, and renounce its guidance - let my soul dwell with Common Sense."[I.] A declamation which hung in the air over all Reid had written, to damage his reputation and embarrass Stewart. Philosophy is to be called back from this suicidal activity and set in the sure path of a science.

Reid thinks that he knows what is behind the attack on common sense. And he thinks that in turning the light on to it he has revealed important origins

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I. Inquiry, Ch. I, Sec.III, p.IOI.

of philosophical error and, by contrast, necessary conditions for the attainment of philosophical truth. The error is fundamentally an error of method: hypothesis where there should be severe induction; analogies where the facts should be left to their uniqueness and a vacuum in the place of first principles. Once the proper method is adopted, the philosophy of common sense could disappear into philosophy, and philosophy become what it has not yet been except in name, a science.

We have seen Reid in the refutation of error. We have now to see how he maps out the path of philosophical progress.

The objects of human knowledge, Reid states in the preface to the Intellectual Powers, fall into two great divisions: the material world and the world of minds (finite minds and God). The corresponding division of the sciences is into natural philosophy and pneumatology or the philosophy of the mind.[I.] Until the time of Galileo and Bacon natural philosophy was the chaos of conflicting opinion that the philosophy of the mind still is. Its reformation was a reformation in method. The reformation of the philosophy of the mind will be a reformation in method.

In what the philosophy of common sense has to teach philosophy Reid does not think that there is really very much of his own; he has done little more than put together what he has learnt from Aristotle, Descartes and Bacon (especially from Bacon). From Aristotle, the necessity for first principles; from Descartes, the uniqueness of the facts with which the philosophy of the mind is concerned; from Bacon that the method of investigation is to be strictly inductive. Reid's

I. Are "grammar, logic, rhetoric ....morals, jurisprudence, law, politics and the fine arts" sub-divisions of the philosophy of the mind? Not, Jouffroy points out, if the philosophy of the mind is described as the science which has mind for its object. "Aucune de ces sciences, aucun de ces arts n'a pour objet la connaissance des esprits; seulement tous présupposent la connaissance d'un certain esprit qui est l'esprit humain". (Oeuvres de Thomas Reid, Préface du Traducteur, p. XXXVIII) Reid becomes aware of this before the end of his preface and ends it by making a group of these sciences and arts because they have a common dependence on the knowledge of the mind as the root from which they grow and are all

special contribution, so he considered and so Stewart considered, is to have taught by precept and example that the method of investigation of these facts is to be strictly inductive.

A science of real existence must be based upon observation. There is a unique kind of observation matching the mind's uniqueness. It is, however, difficult, so difficult that Reid can persuade himself that its difficulty is one of the principle reasons why a science of the mind has hardly begun. It needs a completely disinterested determination to find only what is there, all anticipations and prejudices laid aside. (In actual fact, Beattie remarks, it is usually undertaken with a "metaphysical" book in one's hand.) Its objects are most fugitive. It is painfully against all our normal habits of concentration on what is outside of us - the operations of the mind by their very nature take our attention away from ourselves to what is outside of us. Finally, attention to what is going on in the mind is almost certain to modify it.

There are these difficulties in the way of the careful observation of the mind's actions and passions which is the first stage in an inductive science of the mind. And how can anyone tell by attending to his own mind whether what he finds there are its peculiarities or features common to the minds of all men? There are, however, ancillary sources of information in the enquiry into the mind which can take us beyond singularity to these universal features. These are: the common language of men ("the express image of their thoughts"), their common opinions ("the effect of their intellectual powers"), their common actions ("the effect of their active powers"). The errors even, and prejudices of men, when they are general, are instructive, since there must be a cause for them as

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nourished. In Stewart's classification of the sciences and arts these sciences and arts go together, because they are related to the philosophy of the mind "somewhat" as the whole of medicine is to anatomy. (Life of Reid, p.I5)

general, the discovery of which will throw some light on the structure of the human understanding. And here, in Reid's opinion, is the use of the history of philosophy. It is a history of fanciful theorizing, contradiction and absurdity clinging to truth. We may be able to find the point of view from which things appeared to the author of a system, and from it see improbabilities take on plausibility. We shall have learnt obliquely something of the operations of the mind which we could not perhaps have learnt in any other way.[1]

The temptation to philosophers has always been to describe and to explain the operations of the mind by analogy with the operations of bodies. For the reasons just mentioned, we are more familiar with the world outside us than with the inner world of ourselves, and naturally think of the unfamiliar in terms of the relatively familiar. And philosophers are hurried into these descriptions and explanations by the almost completely analogical vocabulary which everyday language has for the mind.[2] Ordinary people are not led astray, Reid appears to think, by this analogical language.[3] They are not led astray because they do not try to turn it into theory. This is what philosophers have done, and wanting to make the operations of the mind intelligible, they have looked to the operations of bodies to make them intelligible. The theory of ideas is the great consequence. There are others: for example, the standard arguments for determinism, Reid considers, get their plausibility from the picture of the self as the subject of impressed forces. The philosophy of the mind that has come down to

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1. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch. V and VI.
2. Stewart regretfully turns down proposals for the invention of a new and direct vocabulary for the statement of mental facts: The metaphors in the old words would insinuate themselves into the new symbols, if not when they were invented, then when they were taught. Two things can be done in philosophical discourse upon the mind. One is to keep varying the metaphors so that the theories which could be read into them cancel each other out. The other is to attend as far as possible to what the words signify and as little as possible to the images that go along with them. (Elements, Vol.III, Ch.I, pp. 55-59.)
3. Intellectual Powers, IV, Ch. II, p.373. If this is Reid's opinion, it is not his consistent opinion. The once universal belief that the mind was made of some subtle matter arose because men's earliest notions of being were all of material being. These notions moulded language and when the mind was described were

us from antiquity "is almost entirely drawn, not from accurate reflection, but from some conceived analogy between body and mind". Philosophers have begun to turn to the mind itself for its description and "by that means have made important discoveries", These, however, have been located in conceptual systems determined by the old analogical notions proliferating into elaborate explanatory hypothesis. The combination was bound to have the sceptical consequences it has had.[1] Reid is presumably thinking of the 'discovery', from a careful attention to their nature, that sensations could have no archetypes in the physical world, and of the consequences of the incorporation of this discovery in a representative theory of perception.

Nothing has led to so many errors in the philosophy of the mind as the imaginary analogies between matter and mind. Matter and mind are totally different. There is the same absurdity in trying to explain a mental action such as perception upon physical and psychological principles as in trying to explain, for instance, chemical affinity by desire.[2] And nothing but mistakes can come from the attempt to get anything of philosophical importance out of the suggestions of analogy in ordinary language. Reid and Stewart do not help us to understand how, with this total difference between matter and mind, the analogical language is possible at all. "The slightest similitude or analogy is thought sufficient to justify the extension of a form of speech beyond its proper meaning, whenever the language does not afford a more proper form."[3] But there is not the slightest similitude or analogy between matter and mind, Somehow the analogical language is there, and the philosophical way to treat it is to treat it as if it was not there. Since the dualism of the Common Sense philosophers is phenomenologically

transferred analogically to it. (Inquiry, Ch. VII, p.202.)

1. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.VI, p.241.
2. Stewart, Elements, Vol.I, Introduction, p.54.
3. Active Powers, I, Ch.II, p.516.

absolute - Stewart is agnostic about the nature of what lies behind the phenomena- their negative attitude to ordinary language here was inevitable. And it is hard to see that they missed anything because of it which they could have wanted to find. They did not expect that evidence would ever be needed that there are bodies and minds, that minds are things and agents though quite different from material things and agents, or they might have found a use for the analogical language which seems to provide it.

To prescribe to nature as philosophy had traditionally done, Bacon spoke of a "second Fall". Eritis sicut Dii was the whisper heard in the Garden, and it is still in the ears of every philosopher who approaches nature with his mind made up how things are going to be, for this is the approach of nature's author not of its interpreter. Philosophers have always been very ready, in Reid's opinion, to take over the work of creation for they have always been very ready with 'conjectures', 'theories', 'hypotheses'. 'The words have all approximately the same meaning in Reid.) If philosophers continually reminded themselves and others that their conjectures are conjectures, no harm would have resulted, but these reminders are commonly absent , and truth put out of our reach behind conjecture and the illusion of it put into our possession. Descartes' correspondent was right when he remarked that the man who discourses on nature from the study may tell us what the world would have been like if God had given him the commission to make it, but he does not tell us what the world is like. Would a conjectural anatomist have come anywhere near the truth? And the rest of nature is as impenetrable as the structure of the body to any method of investigation except that of observation and its extension in experiment and the inductive conclusions to be drawn from their results.[I.]

Reid's conjectural anatomist is not an easily recognizable type of philosopher

I. Intellectual Powers, I, ChIII, p.236.

or scientist, and the mention of him might lead one to suppose that the only hypotheses that Reid condemns are bare-faced guesses. His condemnations are more inclusive.

If a philosopher claims to be able to account for some phenomenon of nature, there are two things we need to know from him. The first is whether there is sufficient evidence that the cause he assigns really does exist. Satisfied that there is, we then need to know whether the cause does explain the thing it is supposed to explain. Unless both these conditions are met, the explanation is nothing but an hypothesis, and unless some indicationcan be given how they might be met, its place is on the rubbish heap.[I.] The theory of ideas is a perfect hypothesis: it does not explain what it was invented to explain, and there is no independent evidence for its truth. The theory that ideas are the only immediate objects of cognition is not a causal theory, and Reid's discussion of hypotheses is always of causal hypotheses, but the two defects in a causal explanation which leave it a mere hypothesis, can have their analogies in any explanatory theory. Thus Reid thinks that he has shown that there are no ideas and if there were ideas, that they could not do what he thinks they were invented to do: make the cognitive operations of the mind intelligible.

Reid is emphatic on the authority of these conditions. Their statement is intended to be a paraphrase of the first of Newton's regulae philosophandi, and Newton's rules are "maxims of common sense". In order to know what would satisfy these conditions, we need to know from Reid what it is for a cause to 'explain' its effect, and what we can treat as evidence that a cause really exists.

The causal explanations which we can give consist in assigning to an event the antecedents upon which it occurs and without which it does not occur - nothing more than that. We know of course that there must be something more than

I. Intellectual Powers, I, Ch. III, p.236.

that, something that makes it happen, something more to the occurrence of an event, than the bare occurrence of other events previously. But we never know how anything is made to happen. We do not know whether there are any real efficient causes, any agents in the strict sense of the word, besides ourselves and God. For all we know, every effect that we do not produce ourselves may be produced immediately by God, according to the rules of antecedence and consequence that we regard as causal laws.[1] Philosophical discovery is the discovery of these causal uniformities and their subordination to more and more general uniformities. "When we say that one thing produces another by a law of nature, this signifies no more, but that one thing, which we call in popular language the cause, is constantly and invariably followed by another, which we call the effect; and that we know not how they are connected. Thus, we see it is a fact, that bodies gravitate towards bodies; and that this gravitation is regulated by certain mathematical proportions, according to the distances of the bodies from each other, and their quantities of matter. Being unable to discover the cause of this gravitation, and presuming that it is the immediate operation, either of the Author of nature, or of some subordinate cause, which we have not hitherto been able to reach, we call it a law of nature. If any philosopher should hereafter be so happy as to discover the cause of gravitation, this can only be done by discovering some more general law of nature, and the highest link which we can trace, by just induction, is either this primary law of nature, or a necessary consequence of it. To trace out the laws of nature, by induction from the phaenomena of nature, is all that true philosophy aims at, and all it can ever reach."[2]

The relation of laws to events is different from the relation of events to events. Why did a thing happen? We may be asking what happened before it,

1. "Letter to Lord Kames", Reid's Collected Works, p.58.
2. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec.XII, p.157.

asking for its cause. We may know what happened before it, but be unable to see the connection between what went before and what came after. We are asking for the law connecting the events. There is a persistent tendency in Reid to confuse causes and causal laws. Here "the cause of gravitation" is the immediate actions of God or of some subordinate executive; the cause of gravitation is "some more general laws of nature". At any time Reid is prepared to say that a natural cause is a constant antecedent; that a natural cause is a law connecting events in a constant relation of antecedence and consequence.

Since to be a cause, in the sense in which philosophical investigation is concerned with causes, is no more than to be a constant antecedent, it might be thought that we have no means of knowing that something could be the cause of a given phenomenon except in so far as anything could be the cause of anything - without knowing that it actually is. Yet Reid always speaks of the independence of the two conditions which explanation must satisfy. The "syllogism" of discovery has a hypothetical first premiss and a categorical second premiss. "If such a cause exists, it will produce such a phenomenon: but that cause does exist: Therefore, etc."[I] How could one be in a position to assert the first premiss except as a truism from the second? Presumably it is by some analogy with what we have experienced - Descartes' vortices could take the planets round the sun; we have watched eddies in water take things round things.

How do we find out that a possible cause is a cause? Whether the possible cause of something is its cause is "a question of fact" and to be settled by "positive evidence". How was the paradigm of scientific explanation, the principle of the universal gravitation of matter, established? It was established "by induction, partly from our daily experience, and from the experience of all nations in all ages, in all places of earth, sea, and air, which we can reach; and partly from the observations and experiments of philosophers, which shew that even air and smoke, and every body upon which experiments have been made, gravitate precisely in proportion to the quantity of matter; that the sea and earth gravitate towards the moon, and the moon towards them; that theplanets and comets gravitate towards the sun, and towards one another, and the sun towards them. This is the sum of evidence..... It is the same kind of evidence which we have, that fire will

I. "Letter to Lord Kames", Reid's Collected Works, p.57.

burn and water drown, that bread will nourish and arsenic poison."[1]

One ought by now to have been able to take the proscription of "hypotheses" for granted and press for action on it in the philosophy of the mind, but Hartley was recommending the method of hypothesis as properly scientific with perhaps even the implication that it was nearer to the method of science than the methodological reflections of scientists; and he was using it in a physiological approach to the mind. There may be no direct evidence at all for an hypothesis; "still, if it serves to explain and account for a great Variety of Phaenomena, it will have an indirect Evidence in its favour by this means. Thus we admit the Key of a Cypher to be a true one, when it explains the Cypher completely; and the Decypherer judges himself to approach to the true Key, in proportion as he advances in the Explanation of the Cypher; and this without any direct Evidence at all. And as the false and imperfect Keys, which turn up to the Decypherer in his Researches, prepare the Way for the Discovery of the true and complete one, so any Hypothesis that has so much Plausibility, as to explain a considerable Number of Facts, helps us to digest these Facts in proper Order, to bring new ones to Light, and to make Experimenta Crucis for the sake of future Inquirers."[2]

Reid is not disarmed by the end of this passage with its hints at the deductive and indirect verification of hypotheses by the predictions they authorize.[3] Let hypotheses "suggest experiments, or direct our inquiries; but let just induction alone govern our belief". It is the beginning of the passage, however, which mainly holds Reid's attention. Hartley was saying that an hypothesis did not absolutely need independent confirmation of its truth if it could explain a wide range of phenomena. And Reid's answer is to repeat that 'could explain' does not take us any way towards 'does explain'. Descartes' vortices and Pope's gnomes and sylphs could explain a wide range of phenomena.

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1. "Letter to Lord Kames", Reid's Collected Works, p.57.
2. Observations on Man, Pt.I, Ch.I, Sec.I, (1749 edition) pp.15-16.
3. These hints are made plainer in Ch.III, Sec.II. Reid knew this section; he quotes from it.

Reid fumbles for the mistake in the cypher-analogy: To find hypothetically the key to the cypher of nature "requires an understanding equal or superior to that which made the cypher".[1] The mistake in the cypher-analogy, Stewart says, is that "there are few if any physical hypotheses, which afford the only way of explaining the phenomena to which they are applied; and therefore, admitting them to be perfectly consistent with all the known facts, they leave us in the same state of uncertainty, in which the decypherer would find himself, if he should discover a variety of keys to the same cypher".[2]

The common defect, Stewart remarks elsewhere, in all theories for the generation of mental phenomena from psychological causes is that they are "entirely insusceptible of proof; and what is more, are of such a kind, that it is neither possible to confirm nor to refute them, by an appeal to experiment or observation".[3] Yet Stewart's attitude to the place of hypotheses is very different from Reid's. The Copernican astronomy was justified even before it was confirmed by empirical evidence. It was justified by its simplicity. The justification of simplicity in an explanation is that it is analagous to all that we know inductively of the economy of nature. Analogies, Stewart continues, within the system of the material world will support hypotheses within the system of the material world, and this is true also of analogies and hypotheses within the system of the intellectual world. No analogies from one system will support hypotheses in the other.[4]

If Reid and Stewart are to be believed, says Jouffroy, the philosophy of the mind is in its present state as a result of the perverse method applied by antiquity in all the sciences, expelled under the influence of Bacon from the physical sciences, but still with an unrelaxed grip on the philosophy of the mind. And

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. III, p.250.
2. Elements, Vol. II, Ch. IV, Sec. IV, pp. / 313-314.
3. Philosophical Essays, Preliminary Dissertation, Ch. I, p.8.
4. Elements, Vol.II, Ch. IV, SEc. IV, p.314.

they are believed; their opinion "has acquired among us something of the authority of an historical axiom".

Reid and Stewart were not simply mistaken. The physical sciences were transformed by a transformation of method; there has been no similar transformation in the philosophy of the mind, and its transformation will be a transformation in method. Reid and Stewart saw the truth, but they did not see into the truth. Why did all the sciences begin in theory and analogical conjecture, and why has the philosophy of the mind not emerged as a science from it? Reid and Stewart have no satisfactory explanation and consequently their account of the history of the sciences is unplausible and unilluminating even where it is factually accurate. Newton's regulae philosophandi are, as Reid says, maxims of common sense. How could it occur to anyone to prefer analogy and conjecture to observation in the investigation of any part of nature that is open to observation? And in fact when the description of a thing and of the laws of its behaviour has been straightforwardly wanted, men have always examined the thing, whether it is something in the external world or in the mind itself. There is an absurd naivete in the suggestion that it is a modern proposal in the philosophy of the mind to study the mind directly, a proposal "first thoroughly understood, subscribed to and put into practice in Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century".

The questions which can be settled by observation have always been settled by observation when there has been any direct interest in the answers to them. Natural philosophy and the philosophy of the mind began with no interest in the answers to them; with an interest in vast metaphysical problems. What is the nature of the soul? Did it always exist? Will it always exist? What is its relation to the body? The world external to man confronted him with problems of similar ultimacy. To the solution of such problems observation could not

contribute immediately anything but a basis for speculative systems. Once constructed these systems worked downwards and deductively towards empirical conclusions which are matters for inductive investigation only. The reformation of enquiry consists in taking first, questions which come last, in human interest questions which can be settled by observation and experiment, and in the answers to which and nowhere else lie implicit the solutions of any of the ultimate problems which have solutions. Reid and Stewart saw where the science of the mind must begin; they failed to see why it had not begun there.[1]

It is now time to ask what Reid and Stewart think is to come from this concern over uniqueness of the mind and the proper methods of studying it. Reid says, I may not have got very far, but this does not matter if I have been on the right road as far as I have gone; others may be able to go farther.[2] But where to? Stewart says that it is not so much by the particular conclusions that Reid reached, as by the originality of the method, "so systematically pursued in all his researches" that he "stands so conspicuously distinguished among those who have hitherto prosecuted analytically the study of man."[3] You see Reid at his philosophical work, and you hear him talking about how the work of philosophy is to be done and it is hard to find any connection between the two. What has induction to do with the argument between Reid and Hume? Supposing it is true that Reid has been able to give especially careful attention to the operations of his mind,[4] how does this contribute to the defence of common sense? The philosophical method which Reid and Stewart advocate so urgently is a method of discovery, and the philosophers in Stewart's Dissertation on the history of philosophy are always adding or failing to add to the "stock of human knowledge", but Reid does not seem to be trying to add to the stock of knowledge. If you

1. Oeuvres de Thomas Reid, Vol. I, Préf. du Traducteur, p. LVI ff.
2. Inquiry, Ch. I, Sec. II, p.99.
3. Life of Reid, p.16.
4. Inquiry, Dedication, p.96.

had put in front of you in extracts Reid's and Stewart's remarks on method, coupled with their remarks on the special subject matter to which it is to be applied, you would think they came from books of psychology. Reid's books are not books of psychology; Stewart's largely are, but he takes it for granted that his remarks on method and subject matter apply to the parts of them that are not.

Nor is it only when Reid and Stewart themselves speak about what they are doing in philosophy that the puzzling contrast appears between the word and the action. Reid and Stewart showed how an inductive philosophy of the mind is to proceed, McCosh says; this is one of their greatest merits.[1] The great lesson which Reid and Stewart taught French philosophy, in Jouffroy's opinion, was the possibility of an inductive philosophy of the mind; any criticism that he has to make of them is not to touch this acknowledgement.[2]

As the whole of Scottish philosophy from Hume through to Hamilton is marked off in McCosh's judgment from other philosophical traditions by a more or less steady adherence to an inductive method of enquiry (fitful in Hume, undeviating in Reid and Stewart) too much precision is not to be looked for in the description of Reid and Stewart as inductive philosophers. Yet McCosh plainly thought, as Reid and Stewart themselves,did, that they had found truth by observation and inductive inference from it.

It is not difficult to understand in part why Jouffroy thought as he did. Stewart mentions that in the French exposition of Locke the two channels for the entrance of ideas were turned into one, 'ideas of reflection' becoming ideas derived from reflection on ideas of sense, The name of Locke and the work of Condillac established a sensationalist scholasticism in France. In the eyes of the school of philosophers to which Jouffroy belonged a Bacohian revolution was

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1. The Scottish Philosophy, pp. 4-5; p.305; and pass.
2. Esquisses de Philosophie Morale(par Dugald Stewart), Préface du Traducteur, Sec. V; Oeuvres de Thomas Reid, Vol. I, Préf. , Secs. I-IV.

needed and already existed. Reid and Stewart had turned to the mind of man with patient observation and had rescued a whole order of reality from the distortions of theory and system. The problems of philosophy could not be solved in the area to which they were being sent for solution, the area covered by the physical sciences and a physicalist psychology. The place to look for their solution was in the pure science of the mind which had begun in Scotland. Its facts, the phenomena of consciousness are as real as physical facts, and with their laws can be known as certainly.

There are three things that Jouffroy thinks come out of Reid's and Stewart's approach to philosophy. The first is that it sweeps away false approaches. This is Reid's and Stewart's own view. The special interest of Jouffroy's school was in the damage that the inductive philosophy of the mind does to the deductive pretensions of sensationalistic and materialistic conceptions of the mind. It was also Stewart's special interest - Hartley looms over his world with something of the size of Hume over Reid's. We have already noticed the more general polemical use which Reid makes of the uniqueness of the mind. Thus it silences the questions as to how the mind can do what bodies cannot do; that is enter into direct relationships with things remote in space and time. It disallows the analogies out of which the great sceptical hypothesis grows. And the inductive method also has its destructive side; it teaches us what to think of mere hypotheses. The truths of common sense are not inductive discoveries, but their rediscovery, if they have been lost, will owe more to education in the inductive method than to anything else, for if they have been lost it will have been under the rubbish of hypothesis.

The second thing that Reid and Stewart have done, in Jouffroy's opinion is to have laid the proper foundations for a science of psychology. Reid saw himself at the beginning of something, and if it was not at the beginning of a

science of psychology, it is hard to imagine what it could have been. The ground cleared, "the foundations laid, it is time to begin the superstructure", Stewart remarks.[1] The superstructure, with which Stewart admits he has not got very far, is more a descriptive psychology than anything else.

When Reid and Stewart looked at the future of the philosophy of the mind, they thought they saw a science with the two features of a developed science, 'analysis' and 'synthesis'. The work of analysis is to reduce the phenomena in any field of investigation to laws of the highest generality and simplicity. The work of synthesis is to deduce the consequences of combinations of such general laws.[2] The works of Reid and Stewart contain no synthetic deduction of phenomena. How could they, their critics have asked, when they contain no analysis? Reid requires as many original principles to explain the nature of man as most men have needed to explain the nature of the universe, Priestley says.[3] To philosophize is to simplify in Brown's view; Reid and Stewart refuse to simplify and refuse to allow other philosophers to simplify.[4] And whether these critics were right or wrong in criticizing Reid and Stewart for resisting analytic simplification in the philosophy of the mind, they were right in thinking that the philosophy of Common Sense resisted it.

Reid and Stewart were not working as they thought, Francis Jeffrey remarks, towards a science of the mind that would parallel the physical sciences, and give us like them information that we did not previously have, and no continuation of their work will bring that science any nearer. They were doing something important but quite different. What they were doing is more like what the grammarian does when he "arranges in technical order the words of a language which is spoken familiarly", or what a cartographer does when he maps out a man's native

1. Elements, Vol. I, Introduction, p.56.
2. Outlines, Stewart's Collected Works, Vol.II, p.7.
3. Examination, p.110.
4. The Philosophy of the Human Mind, XIII, p.79.

parish for him, than it is like the activity of a "chemist or experimental philosopher". In the philosophy of the mind what is already known is arranged for us, and as the philosopher has no sources of information that are not available to all of us, this is all that can be done. Where, for instance, has the most careful reasoning brought us than "back to the creed and ignorance of the vulgar?[1]

"Logic, whose end is the discovery of truth, is founded", Campbell had said, "in the doctrine of the understanding; and ethics, (under which may be comprehended economics, politics, and jurisprudence) are founded in that of the will."[2] In Reid's opinion "a distinct knowledge of the powers of the mind would undoubtedly give great light to many other branches of science". The tree of knowledge has its roots in the knowledge of the human mind. The philosophy of the mind deserved to be studied not only because of its intrinsic dignity but also for the sake of many sciences, logic and ethics among them, which have an "immediate connection" with it. And he quotes with approval the passage in which Hume proposes the capture of the citadel of the sciences in human nature.[3] Stewart shares Reid's unsuspicious admiration for Hume's project. It was, Stewart says, Reid's great object to prepare the way for the accomplishment of that design "by exemplifying, in an analysis of our most important intellectual and active principles, the only method of carrying it successfully into execution".[4] One of the main objects which Stewart himself had in view when he began his enquiries into the human mind, was to establish and exemplify the "fundamental principle" that "in order to prepare the way for a just and comprehensive system of Logic, a previous survey of our nature, considered as one great whole, is indispensably requisite".[5]

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1. Review of Stewart's "Life of Reid", Edinburgh Review, (Jan. 1804), Vol.III, pp. 276-277.
2. The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Vol.I, Introduction, p.12.
3. Reid, Intellectual Powers, Preface; Hume, Treatise, Introduction.
4. Life of Reid, p.15.
5. Philosophical Essays, Preliminary Dissertation, Ch.II, p.49.

In spite of the design and of the connections and relations they mentioned Reid and Stewart were able to leave the discontinuity between psychology and logic and ethics intact. To make the system of logic more comprehensive, Stewart wrote on the logic of induction. He gave it no foundation in human nature, apart from finding a guarantee there of the truth of the inductive principle. And the "logic of morals" (the phrase is Stewart's) is independent of the psychology of morals in everything that Reid and Stewart wrote.

The virtues of the philosophy of Reid and Stewart were not exhausted in Jouffroy's eyes by its usefulness in controversy with philosophical error and by the directions it gave for the construction of a science of the mind which would have significant implications for other philosophical disciplines. He saw in it also the potentialities of metaphysical development. This is not an opinion that Reid and Stewart share. They were not looking themselves for answers to great questions of philosophy and did not think that anyone who was looking for them would ever find them. Beyond the range of common sense the metaphysical darkness is impenetrable. Reid allows himself a brief speculation on time and eternity and on the infinity of space in extent and divisibility; enough to see that when we discuss such questions we have gone beyond the limits of human understanding. Reid could see, however, that space and time are necessarily endless and that space is also eternal. Pure space is so nearly nothing that "it seems incapable of creation or of annihilation". And the nunc stans of which the Schoolmen spoke has as much meaning for Reid as 'square circle'.[1] To Stewart traditional metaphysical enquiry is a "frivolous and absurd" intrusion into mysteries "placed beyond the reach of our faculties".[2] Stewart is nevertheless to be found illicitly in possession of metaphysical opinions, holding strongly to the axiomatic eternity of space and time. The conviction of their "necessary existence" is "inseparable

1. Intellectual Powers, II, CH. XIX; III, Ch.III.
2. Elements, VolI, Introduction, Pt.I, p.45.

from the very conception" of them.[1]

There is one exception to the proscription of all metaphysics except the metaphysics of common sense. It is within our competence to find out that there is a God. The principles of common sense include the principle that "from certain signs or indications in the effect, we may infer that there must have been intelligence, wisdom, or other intellectual or moral qualities in the cause". This principle is the major premiss in the theistic syllogism. The minor premiss is that the world displays these signs and indications. The principle is not derived from experience; experience cannot show that there is a connection between two things when only one of them is a matter of experience. Another person's work is open to my experience; the intelligence and purpose which contrived it are not. (Indeed each of us comes to know his own intellectual powers, as distinct from the actions in which they are exerted, just as he comes to know another person's - "by the effects which they produce".) The man who can see no force in the argument for design ought to be able to see no evidence that there are any intelligent beings besides himself.[2]

The principles of common sense are not truths which have to be reached in some later stage of philosophical development, reappearing there with a deductive justification behind them. Still less are they mere approximations to truth which are to disappear in some later stage of philosophical development, and be replaced by the truths they hinted at and which a philosopher has discovered. They are truths without which other truths could not be reached. They are first principles in philosophy. Their place is not in the superstructure; they are its foundations. "Philosophy hath no other foundations than the principles of common sense."

Why has the history of mathematics been a history of unbroken progress with

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1. Philosophical Essays, Pt. I, II, Ch.II, p.II6.
2. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.VI, pp. 460-46I.

hardly any disputes and these soon settled? Mathematics were founded upon first principles, upon a "few axioms and definitions", and is the rigorous deduction of their consequences. Why was the history of natural philosophy a battlefield until Bacon and Newton? It was because natural philosophy was without first principles and bacause hypothesis was pitted against hypothesis.

"Lord Bacon first delineated the only solid foundation on which natural philosophy can be built; and Sir Isaac Newton reduced the principles laid down by Bacon in to three or four axioms, which he calls regulae philosophandi. From these, together with the phenomena observed by the senses, which he likewise lays down as first principles, he deduces, by strict reasoning, the propositions contained in the third book of his "Principia", and in his "Optics"; and by this means has raised a fabrick in those two branches of natural philosophy, which is not liable to be shaken by doubtful disputation, but stands immovable upon the basis of self-evident principles."[I.] When first principles are listed and agreed upon for "the other branches of philosophy" they can expect a similar stability and progress. The "great desideratum in logic" is a schedule of first principles and the subscription of philosophers to it. Reid's list of the first principles of necessary and contingent truth is submitted as its rough draft. // Reid is mistaken, Stewart maintains, (I) about the nature of mathematical demonstration (II) about the nature of Newtonian principles (III) about the function of the principles of common sense in philosophy. (Stewart is dealing only with the common sense principles that Reid calls 'principles of contingent truths'. His remarks do not apply to the principles that lay down 'necessary' truths, except in so far as purely logical principles might have got mixed up in their heterogeneity. They do not apply, for instance, to the principle of causation.)

The premisses for geometrical demonstration - it is clearly geometrical

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I. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.IV, p.436.

demonstration that Reid is thinking of - are not self-evident truths. They are not truths at all. The premisses are the definitions; not the axioms and definitions, as Reid sometimes says, still less the axioms alone, as he sometimes says.[1] The axioms are deductively quite sterile. Nothing is implicit in such self-evident truths as that if equals are taken from equals, the remainders are equal. But although the axioms are not "the principles of our reasoning, either in arithmetic or in geometry, their truth is supposed or implied in all our reasonings in both; and, if it were called in question, our further progress would be impossible."[2]

The Newtonian principles are not like mathematical axioms, because they are principles of deduction, and because they are reached by induction. The principles in the philosophy of the mind which correspond to the Newtonian principles in natural philosophy are those "general laws of our constitution" which are reached by analytic examination of the facts of consciousness and similarly explain deductively a great range of phenomena.[3] (And of course Newton's procedural rules are no part at all of his premisses)

The principles of common sense are matter of fact propositions and so are the Newtonian principles. The likeness between them ends there. The principles of common sense are like the mathematical axioms in several respects. ~~These~~ They are intuitively self-evident, and deductively nothing at all will come from them. "From such propositions as these - I exist; I am the same person to-day that I was yesterday; the material world has an existence independent of my mind; the general laws of nature will continue, in future, to operate uniformly as in the time past - no inference can be deduced, any more than from the intuitive truths prefixed to the Elements of Euclid."[4] The principles of common sense are, however, like mathematical axioms in another respect. They are presupposed in all

1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.IV, p.436; VI, Ch.V, p.442.
2. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.I, Sec.I, pp.33-34.
3. Elements, Vol.II, Ch.I, Sec.I, pp.33-34; Vol.I, Introduction, pp.51-52.
4. Section II, pp.45-46.

our thinking. They are not data from which conclusions can be drawn; they are vincula which give coherence to all the particular links of the chain" (p.39). That is why Stewart prefers to call the general truths of common sense 'fundamental laws of belief', or 'constitutive elements of human reason' rather than with Reid and Beattie 'first principles'. Thus all our reasonings concerning nature take for granted its conformity and the existence of a material world independent of our perceptions of it; all our reasonings take for granted our own self-identity and the reliability of memory.

"If the account now given of these laws of belief be just, the great argument which has been commonly urged in support of their authority, and which manifestly confounds them with what are properly called principles of reasoning, is not at all applicable to the subject; or at least does not rest the point in dispute upon its right foundation. If there were no first principles, (it has been said), or in other words, if a reason could be given for everything, no process of deduction could possibly be brought to a conclusion. The remark is indisputably true; but it only proves (what no logician of the present times will venture to deny) that the mathematician could not demonstrate a single theorem, unless he were first allowed to lay down his definitions; nor the natural philosopher explain or account for a single phenomenon, unless he were allowed to assume, as acknowledged facts, certain general laws of nature. What inference does this afford in favour of that particular class of truths to which the preceding observations relate, and against which the ingenuity of modern sceptics has been more particularly directed? If I be not deceived, these truths are still more intimately connected with the operations of the reasoning faculty than has been generally imagined; not as the principles from which our reasonings set out, and on which they ultimately depend, but as the necessary conditions on which every

step of the deduction tacitly proceeds; or rather (if I may use the expression) as essential elements which enter into the composition of reason itself." (pp.46-47.)

CHAPTER V THE LANGUAGE OF SENSATION

I. Natural Signs

The truths of common sense have no logical antecedents. How do we know, for example, that there is an external world? In one way the question is unanswerable. Unanswerable, if it is asking for a proof that there is an external world. All the efforts of philosophers to prove that there is have not, Reid says, produced an argument fit to convince anybody. In another way there is an answer to it. The principles upon which we do in fact come to a knowledge of the external world can be discovered, and it is part of the business of the philosopher of common sense to discover them. He will have discovered the foundations in nature and in human nature of many of the truths of common sense.

Language, says Reid, is commonly supposed to be something that men have entirely invented. By nature they are as dumb as brutes, but they are more intelligent, and have taught themselves to speak by contriving artificial signs to express their thoughts and purposes and having these signs established by compact. This account of the origin of language is too marvellous for Reid. There is one very obvious explanation of the origin of language and it is philosophically interesting because it "tends to lay open some of the first principles of human nature".[I.] The word "language' may be extended to include "all those signs which mankind use in order to communicate to others their thoughts and intentions, their purposes and desires. And such signs may be conceived to be of two kinds: First, such as have no meaning but what is affixed to them by compact or agreement among those who use them - these are artificial signs; Secondly, such as, previous to all compact or agreement, have a meaning which every man understands by the principles of his nature. Language, so far as it consists of artificial signs, may be called artificial; so far as it consists of natural signs, I call it

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I. Inquiry, Ch.Iv, Sec.II, ppII7-II8.

natural .... I think it is demonstrable," Reid continues, "that, if mankind had not a natural language, they could never have invented an artificial one by their reason and ingenuity. For all artificial language supposes some compact or agreement to affix a certain meaning to certain signs; therefore, there must be compacts or agreements before the use of artificial signs; but there can be no compact or agreement without signs, nor without language; and, therefore, there must be a natural language before any artificial language can be invented.[I.]

The primordial language is not a dead language. Its vocabulary is still what it was: gesture, modulation of the voice and varying facial expression. These are natural signs, significant apart from convention. They do not have to be given a meaning; nature has already given them a meaning. We do not have to learn it; nature has already taught us. Babies are frightened by grim and menacing faces. Everyone who has watched children will have noticed that they can very easily distinguish between what is said to them playfully and what in earnest. They go by the natural signs, the tone of voice, the half-smile, when these contradict the 'artificial' signs. If we want any further evidence that there is a wordless language and an intuitive understanding of it, there is the fact that men who have no conventional language in common can communicate with one another.

Everybody will admit, Reid remarks, that there is a wordless language of gesture, intonation and facial expression; the question is whether its interpretation has to be learnt. How could it be learnt?

"When we see the sign, and see the thing signified always conjoined with it, experience may be the instructor, and teach us how that sign is to be interpreted. But how shall experience instruct us when we see the sign only, when the thing signified is invisible? Now, this is the case here: the thoughts and passions of the mind, as well as the mind itself, are invisible, and therefore their

I: Inquiry, Ch.IV, Sec.II, pp.II7-II8.

connection with any sensible sign cannot be first discovered by experience: there must be some earlier source of this knowledge."[1]

Reid's statement of the case for a natural language prior to all conventional languages and still contemporaneous with them could survive empirical criticism. He was indeed very much impressed by classical references to the range of communication that was possible without the use of words. There was the dispute between Cicero and Roscius over whether an orator could convey anything by words which an actor could not convey in dumb-show. There was the Roman pantomime, with Lucian's story of the king on the Euxine who wanted to borrow a pantomimist from Nero so that he could dispense with an army of interpreters in negotiations with his neighbours.[2] Reid thinks, however, that the proto-language of mankind must have been very circumscribed, sufficient merely for the barest necessities of communication, but sufficient, therefore, for the establishment of a conventional language. He did think that its vocabulary was and is everywhere the same, and everywhere intelligible without having to be learnt. In fact the expressive signs of men's feelings and intentions are hardly more universal than the universal grammar, on which Reid leans so heavily, in conventional languages. But their want of universality would not destroy Reid's theory. His theory requires no more than that the members of a group should have been able to understand one another without speech, inorder to be able to proceed to the invention of speech. And Reid is not committed to the view that the connections which nature has established between feelings and their physical manifestations are too rigid to be capable of modification by discipline, natural signs being replaced by conventional signs whose interpretation has to be learnt. The Japanese smile would not refute him. It is enough that there are some natural signs which are immediately intelligible.

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1. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, pp.449-450.
2. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.V, p.450.

A behaviouristic interpretation of the signs of what is passing in the mind, an interpretation of them as means by which we go from the overt to the overt and never from the overt to the covert, would be more troublesome to Reid than any empirical criticism of his theory. Reid's whole philosophy requires the principle that transitions can be made from sensible signs to the altogether different things which they signify - transitions which go beyond experience if 'experience' is confined for epistemological security to sensations and other states of our own consciousness, but which in their directness form part of what is ordinarily called 'experience'. We experience and do not infer a man's anger from the marks of it on his face. Physical objects are themselves objects of experience and their existence does not have to be deduced from objects of experience. And the structure of experience is similar in both cases, Reid considers, and in neither does experience have a phenomenal termination.

The natural signs in the native language of mankind belong to one class of natural signs. There are for Reid three classes of natural signs. In all three classes the connection between the sign and what it signifies is established by nature - it is this that distinguishes a natural sign from a conventional sign. The signs of the first class are not understood intuitively; they might mean anything, as far as we are concerned, until we find out what they do mean. They are in themselves like words in an unfamiliar language. High streaky clouds are a sign of wind, and the blueness of hills a sign of their distance. We have discovered this by experience and would never have known it otherwise. This class of natural signs is the "foundation of true philosophy", which is nothing but the discovery by observation and experiment of the matter of fact connections established by nature, their reduction to general laws and the deduction of the consequences of these laws. Philosophy has traditionally been described as a search for causes. "What we commonly call natural causes might, with more propriety, be called

natural signs, and what we call effects, the things signified. The causes have no proper efficiency or causality, as far as we know; and all we can certainly affirm is, that nature hath established a constant conjunction between them and the things called their effects; and hath given to mankind a disposition to observe those connections, to confide in their continuance."[1]

In the second class of natural signs the sign itself explains itself. The signs of this class make up the natural language of mankind. They are also, and for this reason, the foundation of the fine arts. In the expressiveness of the arts we hear again the primordial language which we can all understand and to which we respond at a level deeper than the level of the understanding. (Abolish conventional languages, and in a century every man would be a painter or a musician or an actor.) Reid does not think that art is simply the disciplined communication of emotion, but he does think that it must be the expression of some aspect of the mind. There is no beauty or sublimity in material things apart from the 'signature' of mind somehow upon them. The beauty and sublimity of nature is God's mind, so to speak, sensibly present. And in another way, Reid perhaps suggests, it is the expression of our own minds. Even our everyday prose descriptions of nature are full of worn-out poetry; the sea rages and the skies lower - things external to man made signs of what is within him.[2]

The problem of our knowledge of other minds is thus easily solved as far as it has a solution. We know them through their self-disclosure in natural signs, for these are "so many openings into the souls of our fellow-men, by which their sentiments become visible to the eye".[3] The epistemological problem has not, of course, been solved. No reason has been given to justify our claim to a knowledge of other minds; no premisses have been provided for a deductive conclusion. The inference from the sign to its signification has its own unique logic. No one can "perceive

1. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.III, p.122.
2. Inquiry, Ch, V, Sec.III, p.122; Active Powers, VIII, Ch.IV, p.503.
3. Active Powers, III, Pt.II, Ch.VI, p.574.

any necessary connection between the signs of such operations, and the things signified by them".[1] Nevertheless the connections are there, the signs do signify, and it is through them that a man's private consciousness becomes publically accessible to other men before they can speak to one another and while they speak to one another. And since the belief that everyone lives an inner life of thought, feeling and desire does not come to us through reasoning, it would not be surprising if we were unable to give a reason for it, and that the ordinary man should find the demand for such a reason astonishing. Tell him that he must have a reason, that he cannot be so credulous as to hold the conviction with such strength and be unable to say anything at all in support of it, and you might get from him an argument that would equally prove a watch or a puppet to be alive and conscious. Show him that his argument is a very bad argument. You "cannot make him in the least doubtful"; you have not touched the foundations of his belief.

One could indeed give a reason for concluding that other men are intelligent beings; what they do bears the marks of intelligence. And in the same way the world shows itself to be the work of intelligence. But men do not infer thought and intention in other men by applying the argument from design. And in any case, the principle upon which the argument from design depends is itself a principle for which no reason can be given.[2]

It is, Stewart agrees, through the interpretation of natural signs that we become aware of other people's states of mind. It is not by analogical inference. We did not, for example, come to know that people are happy when they are smiling by first observing in our own case that a smile is an expression of happiness and then by inferring happiness in someone else from its expression on his face. A child would have had to learn somehow to identify what it <u>feels</u> on its own face with what it <u>sees</u> on another person's face. We would have previously had to

1: <u>Active Powers</u>, V, Ch.VI, p.665.
2. <u>Intellectual Powers</u>, VI, Ch.V, pp.448-449.

observe ourselves in mirrors in order to be able to make out from someone else's display of emotion which was being ~~displayed~~. Reid, however, is asking too much of us in asking us to accept the opinion that the natural signs of an emotion would convey an idea of it to someone who had never felt it himself. (Stewart takes it for granted that this is Reid's opinion. It was Reid's opinion that even babies could make out something of people's dispositions towards them from their looks and the sound of their voices, but nothing he has said indicates whether or not he held that the natural signs of all the emotions are interpretable without the prior experience in ourselves of what they signify in others.)

Stewart thinks that the interpretation of the natural signs of other people's states of mind is accounted for by what he calls the 'law of sympathetic imitation'.[1] The connection of emotions with their expression is reversible. The emotions produce their appropriate expression, and similar conditions of the body to those constituting their expression produce something of the correspondent emotions. We imitate, without noticing it, the bodily manifestations of other people's emotions and in consequence similar emotions are aroused in us. Sympathetic imitation, Stewart points out, is strongest in children, and his theory could allow that as we grow older the natural signs come to operate for us with acquired meanings (shifting from the second to the first of Reid's classes). It is thus not by sympathetic imitation that a grown man sees into the mind of another man. Stewart considers he has explained something Reid left unexplained - the mechanics of the interpretation of a class of natural signs, not noticing the gap between states of mind sympathetically induced in us and our knowledge that someone else shares them.

'States of mind' in general Stewart speaks of, and 'emotion' in particular, but he always illustrates his theory with the emotions. Reid speaks of 'thoughts', 'purposes', 'desires' and 'sentiments' and 'passions of the mind' as all signified

1: Elements, Vol III, Sec.II, p.137 ff.

to us by natural signs. He hardly illustrates his theory with anything except the passions and sentiments.

"A third class of natural signs comprehends those which, though we never before had any notion or any conception of the thing signified, do suggest it, or conjure it up, as it were by a natural kind of magic, and at once give us a conception and create a belief of it."[1] And as the first class of natural signs is the foundation of "true philosophy" and the second of the fine arts, so the third is "the foundation of common sense - a part of human nature which hath never been explained".[2] Thus the common sense belief in an external world is grounded upon the fact that our sensations, themselves nothing but modifications of ourselves, are yet signs of the presence of physical objects existing in entire independence of us. In all the classes of natural signs nature has established the connection between the signs and what they signify. In none of them is the connection, as far as we know, a necessary connection. In the second and third classes the signs are interpreted intuitively, but not in the first. How does the third class differ from the second? Reid does not elaborate the difference, but it seems to turn on the origin of the conceptions involved in the interpretation of the signs.

To understand a natural sign is to have a conception of the thing signified, and a belief in its existence.[3] The conceptions involved in understanding a natural sign of the third class are obtainable in one way only, and that is by understanding the sign. Thus there is a single source of the conception of a physical object as well as of the belief in physical objects. It is the significatory power of the sensations which we have from them. There is a single source

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1. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.III, p.122.
2. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.III.p.122.
3. The signs of the first class presumably create anything between a firm belief and a mere tendency to belief, according to our experience of the constancy of the connection between the sign and what it is a sign of. We put, for example, different reliance on different weather signs.

of the conception of the substantial self and of the belief in it. All our experiences signify, as part of their reference, the subject to which they belong. The conceptions involved in understanding signs of the second class are obtainable without the intermediacy of natural signs, obtainable from our consciousness of the operations of our minds. Reid leaves it doubtful whether they could also be read off, independently of any experiences we might have had ourselves, from the natural signs of the operations of other people's minds.

".... thefoundation of common sense - a part of human nature which hath never been explained." Hamilton's note directs our attention to Stewart's comment. Stewart's comment is that Reid is using 'common sense' here with a "technical meaning of his own, and has even spoken of this meaning as a thing not generally understood".[I.] It is an odd comment for Stewart to have made, when the purpose of the chapter on natural signs is so plain. Reid is not engaged in elucidating the meaning of 'common sense', but in providing the only kind of answer he thinks possible to anyone asking how we come to know that the beliefs of common sense are true: Nature is so constituted that certain phenomenal facts are signs of certain metaphysical facts and human nature is so constituted as to be able to interpret these signs intuitively.

It is untidyness in a point of detail that our belief in other minds depends on natural signs belonging to the second class. There are more important anomalies. The inductive principle stands aside from other common sense beliefs as a condition of the operation of signs of the first class. The belief in free will is not reached by any interpretation of natural signs, and Reid has made the immediacy of memory so thorough that nothing seems to be left which could function as a sign connecting the present with the past.

Reid would be deeply unimpressed by this criticism. If some of the beliefs

I. Elements, Vol. II, Sec.III, p.68.

of common sense dispense with a foundation which others of them require, an inductive philosophy of the mind has to recognize that this is so, and to resist the temptation of theoretical completeness.

Scattered through the Inquiry are the fragments of an elaborate though unsystematic analogy between the systems of natural signs and a language. (It is perhaps because the idea has become so thoroughly Reid's own that he does not fully realize how much of it comes from Berkeley.) We shall put the fragments together. To begin with, natural signs are in one way really much more like words than would occur to us when we think of the signs as established by "nature". Words are sounds or marks which have no significance in themselves, but are made significant by being arbitrarily chosen to stand for things or to perform some syntactical function. Nature has not chosen to establish relations of signification, but the true author of these is not nature but nature's author. Reid is always emphasizing the arbitrariness of the connections in nature; apart from God's appointment, anything might have gone with anything, for all we know to the contrary. But just as the connections between words and the things they are made to stand for, once established, retain by custom some permanence, so by the custom of Divine providence, the connections between one thing and another once established remain established.

When the way in which we come to understand the languages of nature and the way in which we come to understand human languages is compared, a partial break appears in the analogy. All human languages have to be learnt. Only one of the languages of nature has to be learnt. (The Novum Organon is its grammar-book, Reid remarks. The borrowed materials for Reid's analogy are from Bacon when they are not from Berkeley.) One of the systems of natural signs resumes the likeness to a language in being a means of communication between men, and just as it is

necessary for us to know our mother tongue before we can learn a language, so it is necessary to know this 'language' before we can learn a language.

Though, however, only one of the systems of natural signs is a means of communications between men, all of them function in something which has some resemblance to communication. They are all languages in which the "testimony" of nature is communicated to men. The strain is taken off the analogy a little when we again remind ourselves that Reid is not merely personifying nature. Nature's speech is God's at second hand. It is God in fact, in Reid's philosophy, who lays the foundation of common sense. (The mottos of Reid's first two books are: "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?") It is not indeed the case that without a belief in God we shall sooner or later find ourselves without the beliefs of common sense. They force themselves on us whatever our other beliefs. But if it is a question of how we could be in a position to know their truth, and in the way Reid supposed, of how things must be for this to be possible, what other answer is there than a reference to the way God has made us and the world? It would be too improbable that there should merely happen to be systems of phenomenal signs with metaphysical significations, signs which we should merely happen to be able to understand intuitively. One would more readily believe that they do exist, if one also believed that they were intended to exist, and so had this further resemblance to a language.

Human language would be impossible without a disposition in speakers to speak the truth and in hearers to believe what they are told. God has matched in us the two principles of "veracity" and "credulity". Reid sees an analogy to the first of these principles in the fact of the regularity of nature. "If there were not a principle of veracity in the human mind, men's words would not be signs of their thoughts: and if there were no regularity in the course of nature, no

one thing could be a natural sign of another."[1] He sees an analogy to the second of them in the fact that we are intuitively certain of this regularity. Though part of this testimony of nature is given in a language whose meaning is learnt by "custom", it is not by custom, it is by an "original principle implanted in human minds", that we know that there is the unbroken connection, without which the language of nature could not exist, between the signs and the things they signify.

Why is Reid so deeply interested in the analogy between systems of natural signs and a language? There is no likeness between words and what they stand for, nor any necessary connection between them. There is no likeness between natural signs and what they signify, nor (so far as we know) any necessary connection between them. When we have learnt the meaning of a word, the word "suggests" the thing it stands for and "creates a belief of it". When we have learnt the meaning of a natural sign, or know its meaning without having to learn it, the sign operates in a similar way to produce a conception of what it signifies and a belief in its existence.[2] The purpose of the analogy is to illuminate the operation of natural signs. Natural signs and words do the same thing in a similar way.

We need in fact to have understood Reid's account of the operation of natural signs in order to understand the double function he is ascribing to words; otherwise we should not know what he means when he says that words "create a belief" in the things they stand for. Natural signs do this; words merely as words do not. Reid no doubt on reflection would entirely agree. The analogy between natural signs and language at this point will have to be between natural signs and a special use of language, its use with the intention of producing belief. It will have to be, as Reid more usually makes it, the analogy between the testimony of nature expressed through natural signs and human testimony expressed through words. In both to understand the sign, whether it is a verbal sign or a natural sign, is

I. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec.XXIV, p.198.
2. Inquiry, Ch, Vi, Sec.XXIV, p.195.

to pass immediately from the sign to "a conception and a belief of the thing signified".

2. Sensation and Perception

There is a language of sensation. Sensations are the natural signs of physical objects and their properties and as such constitute this language, and it is by understanding the signification of these signs that we are enabled to know all that we do know of physical objects and their properties. For without perception we could know nothing of them at all, and to perceive a physical object is to have the "conception and belief of it" "suggested" to us by the sensations that we have from it. Reid says that he has no theory of perception, and Stewart says that Reid has no theory of perception. They mean that Reid's account of perception is nothing more than a straightforward description of the central facts involved by the constitution of our nature in perception, and that the inexplicability of the connections between these facts is recognized by Reid and left untampered with by conjecture. The wording of the description has the sound of theory, and in any case it will be convenient to speak of Reid's theory of perception.

Reid introduces his theory in its application to the simpler senses, beginning with the sense of smell. There are advantages in taking the more complicated sense of touch first - for one thing, what Reid calls 'sensations' are less doubtfully sensations.

I pick up a billiard ball. I immediately perceive it to be round, smooth and hard. If I attend carefully to all that I am aware of, or can become aware of as I hold the ball, I notice the feelings in my finger-tips and the palm of my hand. These feelings have no names of their own in any language. When they are referred to at all, they are referred to significantly as feelings of roundness, of hardness

of smoothness. We have to bring ourselves to attend to them, just as we have to bring ourselves to attend to the look of the words on a page we are reading, for like words their function is to point away from themselves. These feelings Reid calls 'sensations'. The sensations are not in the thing I am holding in my hand. Where are they? Reid says they are "in the mind". One might have thought that an untheoretical description of the facts of perception would have said with ordinary men that the feelings are in the finger-tips and the palm of the hand. If Reid's purpose in speaking of the location of sensations had been the ordinary man's , the familiar words would have been the right words. When "a man says he has a pain in his toe, he is perfectly understood, both by himself and those who hear him. This is all that he intends. He really feels what he and all men call a pain in the toe."[I.] For practical purposes he locates his sensations where their causes are. He has no occasion to reflect on the <u>esse</u> of sensations, and therefore none to ask and answer a philosopher's question.

Now let us compare the feelings of roundness, hardness and smoothness with roundness, hardness and smoothness. They are as different as things can be, without one property in common. And when we compare their modes of existence, we find that we are comparing things that can exist no longer than we are aware of them with things that exist whether we are aware of them or not. Yet all I have to go on (supposing my eyes are shut) in perceiving that I am holding something round, smooth and hard are the sensations in my finger-tips and the palm of my hand. If I had been born blind, these are all that I would ever have had to go on. I cannot have learnt the significance of these sensations. I can learn that one thing is the sign of another thing, and so learn to infer one from the other, when I can experience the two things independently and discover their connection. But this is not how it is here. There is no resemblance between sensations and

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I. <u>Intellectual Powers</u>, II, Ch.XVIII, p.320.

physical qualities, and when we look for any "tie or connection" between them, anything that would begin to explain why this sensation "suggests" or "introduces" that quality, we can find nothing at all. Take hardness, for instance, and the feeling of hardness. The feeling is no sort of copy of the quality; "nor will the logician ever be able to shew a reason why we should conclude hardness from this feeling, rather than softness, or any other quality whatsoever."[1]

What answer would Reid give to the logician who said that the reason why the feeling of hardness suggests hardness and nothing else, is that a hard object, as far as common sense is concerned, is nothing but an object which gives us the feeling of hardness when we press against it? By 'hardness', Reid says, we mean in common speech something "whose parts stick so firmly together, that they cannot be displaced without considerable force".[2] Reid might have been persuaded quite easily enough that this is a natural philosopher's account of hardness. He himself maintains that the sensations which we have from the secondary qualities of physical objects signify no more than that there is something or other in the objects in virtue of which we have these sensations from them. It would not damage his theory of perception if he had to speak in the same way of hardness. It would destroy it if he had to speak in the same way of one physical quality after another. What conception do we have of smoothness? Is a smooth surface simply one which gives silky feelings to the hand that is run over it? Not even to a blind man, Reid is certain; a blind man can feel the absence of irregularities in it and therefore he knows what a smooth surface is, not merely what it is relative to us. (Though a relative concept, smoothness is an objectively relative concept.) And our concept of figure is of it as it is in itself, and our concept of the extension which is presupposed by all other physical qualities.

How do we come to have the idea of extension? We are told by philosophers

1. Inquiry, Ch. V, Sec.V, p.I25.
2. Inquiry, Ch. V, Sec. V, p.I25.

that the idea of extension is an idea of sensation as if that put an end to any difficulty in the matter. We are told something that conceals a mystery under a show of obviousness. How does a sensation or a combination of sensations give us the idea of extension? If we reflect on the origin of this idea and of our belief that we live in a world of extended objects, we shall have to recognize once again the inexplicable operation of sensations as natural signs.

"The notion of extension is so familiar to us from infancy, and so constantly obtruded by everything we see and feel, that we are apt to think it obvious how it comes into the mind; but upon a narrower examination we shall find it utterly inexplicable. It is true we have feelings of touch, which every moment present extension to the mind; but how they come to do so, is the question; for those feelings do no more resemble extension, than they resemble justice or courage - nor can the existence of extended things be inferred from those feelings by any rules of reasoning; so that the feelings we have by touch, can neither explain how we get the notion, nor how we come by the belief of extended things."[I.]

The simple truth is that we know by "a natural and original principle of our constitution" how to interpret the sensations of touch.

What has Reid explained that the philosophers left unexplained when they said that the idea of extension is an idea of sensation? Nothing. It is the answer required by Reid's doctrine. The connection between every natural sign and the thing it signifies is altogether inexplicable. Our knowledge of the connection is altogether inexplicable, when the sign is a sign belonging to either the second or third class of natural signs. If the doctrine explains nothing, does it even assert anything that anyone would deny? It asserts that we know intuitively the signification of the sensations which we have from physical objects, and that, if we did not, experience could not inform us. And these assertions would

I. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.V, p.124.

be denied by philosophers denying that we have any knowledge of physical objects and by philosophers with a claim to be able to derive all our knowledge from experience.

We now turn to the other senses. Reid examines two of these in detail. The examination of the sense of smell gives results he thinks transferable with trivial modifications to the other senses. The sense of sight requires separate attention.

There is a sensation of smell. We had no difficulty in understanding the phrase 'sensation of touch'; we have to be helped to understand the meaning of 'sensation of smell'. One would like to say that Reid speaks of a 'sensation of smell' where we would ordinarily speak of a 'smell'. Reid would disown this attempt at elucidation. The words 'smell', 'taste', 'sound', as also 'heat' and 'cold', he considers all have a kind of ambiguity: as words in common use, they stand for certain 'sensations' and also for the qualities of physical objects in virtue of which we have these 'sensations' and primarily for the qualities, These words have only a kind off ambiguity. They can hardly be said to stand sometimes for the qualities and sometimes for the 'sensations'. They cover both in a single application, there being no occasion in the common affairs of life to distinguish between them. It is essential for philosophers to make the distinction. Reid uses the expression 'sensation of smell' (of taste, of sound....) in order to make the distinction. And if he has not misdescribed the ordinary use of the word 'smell' (and of other words which resemble it) we shall have understood what it is that he is referring to by the expression: it is not the physical quality; it is the other thing named by the same word as names the physical quality.

We shall not perhaps have understood why Reid is calling it a 'sensation'. Examine its nature. It is simply such as it appears to be. We know practically nothing by the sense of smell as it is a quality of some physical object; its

nature is a matter for physical enquiry. For the other thing designated by the word 'smell', there is no other source of information than the sense of smell. And this thing is plainly something to which it would be absurd to ascribe any physical properties, even spatial location. It is plainly something which cannot exist except in a sentient being and its duration is the duration of the consciousness of it. These are the characteristics of a sensation.[I.]

If, when they are pointed out to us, we are unable to discern these characteristics in the 'sensation' of smell or in the 'sensations' of taste, sound, and colour, if we think that these things are not sensations, that some or all of them might exist in the absence of any sentient being, Reid is unable to say anything that will make their nature more evident. He has explanations showing why it is unnoticed before it is pointed out: We do not attend to the sound of words, but to their sense; not to natural signs, but to the things they signify. And sensations in their normal self-effacement before the things they signify seem to merge into them and to take on their alien characteristics and have their own obliterated.

Sensations are essentially identical with the awareness of them, and signify objects which are essentially distinct from the awareness of them, external objects, objects of perception. "The same mode of expression is used to denote sensation and perception; and, therefore, we are apt to look upon them as things of the same nature. Thus, I <u>feel a pain</u>; <u>I see a tree</u>: the first denoteth a sensation, the last a perception. The grammatical analysis of both expressions is the same: for both consist of an active verb and an object. But, if we attend to the things signified by these expressions, we shall find that, in the first, the distinction between the act and the object is not real but grammatical; in the second, the distinction is not only grammatical but real.

I. <u>Inquiry</u>, Ch.II, Sec.II, p.105.

"The form of expression, I feel pain, might seem to imply that the feeling is something distinct from the pain felt; yet, in reality, there is no distinction. As thinking a thought is an expression which could signify no more then thinking, so feeling a pain signifies no more than being pained. What we have said is applicable to every other mere sensation..... Perception, ..., hath always an object distinct from the act by which it is perceived; an object which may exist whether it be perceived or not."[1]

Imagine a man suddenly and for the first time in his life given the power of smell, and there is a rose in front of him. He has a sensation of smell. What does he perceive by means of the sensation? Not the rose, not to begin with. He is aware of a new sensation in himself and aware that he is not himself the cause of it. He knows nothing else about its cause. The sensation signifies its occult cause.[2] (By means of the sensation its occult cause is perceived. This Reid does not say, but his theory of perception requires him to be willing to say it.)

When the rose is taken away the sensation of smell disappears, returns when the rose is brought back. The cause of the sensation then is the rose or something in the rose. When this has been learnt, the sensation becomes a sign of the presence of a rose, shifting for all practical purposes from the third to the first class of natural signs. The rose becomes an object of perception through smell.

We are now in a position to understand the "real foundation" for the distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of bodies ~~is this~~ : Our senses "give us a direct and a distinct notion of the primary qualities, and inform us what they are in themselves. But of the secondary qualities, our senses give us only a relative and obscure notion. They inform us only, that they are qualities that affect us in a certain manner - that is, produce in us a certain sensation; but as to what they are in themselves, our senses leave us in the dark."[3] The too

1. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec.XX, pp.182-183.
2. Inquiry, Ch.II, Sec.II, p. 105.
3. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XVII, p.313.

unqualified assertion that sensations efface themselves before the things they signify has to be corrected.

"We may see why the sensations belonging to secondary qualities are an object of our attention, while those which belong to the primary are not.

"The first are not only signs of the object perceived, but they bear a capital part in the notion we form of it. We conceive it only as that which occasions such a sensation, and therefore cannot reflect upon it without thinking of the sensation which it occasions: we have nocother mark whereby to distinguish it. The thought of a secondary quality, therefore, always carries us back to the sensation which it produces. We give the same name to both, and are apt to confound them together.

"But, having a clear and distinct conception of primary qualities, we have no need when we think of them, to recall their sensations. When a primary quality is perceived, the sensation immediately leads our thought to the quality signified by it, and is itself forgot. We have no occasion afterwards to reflect upon it; and so we come to be as little acquainted with it as if we had never felt it. This is the case with the sensations of all primary qualities, when they are not so painful or pleasant as to draw our attention."[I.]

Nobody asks to be told what extension, figure, hardness and softness, smoothness and roughness, solidity, divisibility and motion are. His senses have already told him. And the information supplied concerning the nature and existence of these qualities is entirely objective information. When we perceive that something is round, smooth and hard we know implicitly that it is perceived as it would be if we did not exist. We know implicitly from the testimony of the senses that even the secondary qualities of bodies are whatever they are in complete independence of ourselves. (Sense experience has essentially this objectivity, and we have

I. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XVII, p.315.

misunderstood Reid unless we have seen a similar objectivity in common sense as part of the implication of the analogy between sense and common sense.)

Nobody knows by the sense of smell what smell in the rose is, by the sense of taste what taste in the pineapple is, by the glow of warmth what heat in the fire is. These are matters for "philosophical" investigation, in which, Reid mentions, there has been a good deal of progress. Interested, a "plain man" asks a "modern philosopher" what, for instance, smell in plants is. "The philosopher tells him, that there is no smell in plants, nor anything but in the mind; and that it is impossible there can be smell but in the mind; and that all this hath been demonstrated by modern philosophy."[I.] Who is to blame for the plain man's opinion of the philosopher? The philosopher is to blame. For either he means by the word 'smell' what other men mean by it - primarily the external quality - and then his opinion isreally absurd, or else abusing languageshe expresses a true opinion absurdly.

The encounter between the plain man and the philosopher is repeated in the Intellectual Powers. This time the philosopher is assuring him that fire is not hot. Reid now thinks that there is some confusion in the plain man's mind to begin with. It is not to be expected that he will have made distinctions which the everyday affairs of life do not require. He does not therefore distinguish between primary and secondary qualities. His notions of the primary qualities are clear and accurate; of the secondary qualities, not so much erroneous as clouded. A secondary quality is "the unknown cause or occasion of a well-known effect". As plain men we have not had to distinguish between the objective and the subjective components in our notions of the secondary qualities. The philosopher has been asked a question which cannot be answered until the distinctions are made. He has made the distinctions, but without any respect for ordinary

I. Inquiry, Ch.II, Sec.VIII, p.II2.

language. When he has explained himself and the plain man has thought about heat, they no longer charge each other with opposite absurdities.[1]

We have now to deal with the sense of sight and to consider first colour and then 'visible' figure.

"By colour, all men, who have not been tutored by modern philosophy, understand, not a sensation of the mind, which can have no existence when it is not perceived, but a quality or modification of bodies, which continues to be the same whether it is seen or not. The scarlet-rose which is before me, is still a scarlet-rose when I shut my eyes, and was so at midnight when no eye saw it. The colour remains when the appearance ceases; it remains the same when the appearance changes. For whenI view this scarlet-rose through a pair of green spectacles, the appearance is changed; but I do not conceive the colour of the rose changed. To a person in the jaundice, it has still another appearance; but he is easily convinced that the change is in his eye, and not in the colour of the object. Every different degree of light makes it have a different appearance, and total darkness takes away all appearance, but makes not the least change in the colour of the body."[2]

The appearance of colour is a sensation. "Mr. Locke calls it <u>an idea</u>" and, Reid adds astonishingly, "it may be called so with the greatest propriety....It is a ~~kind~~ kind of thought, and can only be the act of a percipient or thinking being."[3] The sensation of colour is never called 'colour', Reid says, though he also says that sensation and quality are run together so closely in the imagination as to be mistaken for the same thing. He then denounces with especial severity the philosophical paradox that visible objects have no colour and that colour is in something invisible, the mind.[4]

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1. <u>Intellectual Powers</u>, II, Ch.XVII, pp.315-316.
2. <u>Inquiry</u>, Ch.VI, Sec.IV, p.137.
3. <u>Inquiry</u>, Ch. VI, SecIV, p.137.
4. <u>Inquiry</u>, Ch. VI, Secs. IV-V.

Stewart has a brief conjectural history of the externalization of the sensation of colour. The connection of the sensation of colour with "visible extension and figure" is a matter of association, but since the association began as soon as our eyes opened, it is now indissoluble. It is not improbable that visible extension and figure would appear to us at first merely as "modifications of the mind". Distance is not perceived by sight until sight has learnt from touch. Visible figure comes to be visually located where tangible figure is, the sensation of colour moving with its associate to an illusory distance.[1]

To locate "visible objects" in the mind, to deny them externally is, Reid says - he is criticizing Berkeley - to affirm "a top and a bottom, a right and a left in the mind". Reid is not well enough acquainted with the "topography of the mind" to be able to give any sense to these words. Alternatively, it is to deny any resemblance between the objects of sight and the objects of touch.[2]

Reid "shaves off extension" from the appearance of colour when he wants to have it a sensation.[3] He even seems to think that with certain deformations of the eye colour can be seen unextended, and it looks then as things do when seen through a "glass of broken jelly",[4] their colour visible but not their shape. Stewart does not offer any experimental assistance to make it easier for us to imagine how visible extension and figure would look if they ever appeared to us as modifications of the mind.

Visible figure, Reid says, is the one exception to the rule that there is no similitude and no necessary connection between a natural sign and what it signifies.[5] Visible figure is a natural sign of real figure, resembles it and is necessarily connected with it. The visible figure of a thing is its perspectival figure. A thing has one real shape which does not change with the different points of view

1. Dissertation, Pt.I, Ch.II, p.131.
2. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec.XI, p.155.
3. John Fearn, The Physiology of the Human Mind, p. 35.
4. Intellectual Powers, Ch.VI, Sec. VIII, p.145.
5. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Secs.VII-VIII. p.

and distances from which it is seen and as many different apparent shapes as there are points of view and distances from which it is seen. (Berkeley has apprppriately called the real shape 'tangible' figure because it is ascertained, as nearly as it can be ascertained, by touch.)

Visible figure is not a sensation. It is a real figure - a "real and external object to the eye" - though not the real figure of the thing of which it is the appearance. The structure of the eye partly determines its nature. The relation between real figure and visible figure, as determined by the structure of the eye, is the relation between a three-dimensional figure and its projection on to the surface of a sphere. It is altogether irrelevant to the existence of visible figure that it is seen (assuming that Reid means by 'external'here what he means by it elsewhere).

A peculiarity in the awareness of visible figure is that it is an awareness of an external object which is not conveyed by any sensation. There is no sensation present whenever we see except the 'sensation' of colour, and we might Reid thinks, have been so constituted as to be able to see figure without being able to see colour.[I.]

There is a necessary connection between visible figure and its dimensions and real figure and its dimensions. Visible figure with its magnitude is mathematically deducible, given the real figure of a thing, its magnitude and "position". It is not impossible for a blind man to understand the laws of perspective. He could therefore calculate a thing's visible figure, from these data. He needs only to be able to "project the outline of a given body, upon the surface of a hollow sphere, whose centre is in the eye. This projection is the visible figure he wants: for it is the same figure with that which is projected upon the tunica

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I. ".... it appears to me to be evident that ....the varieties in our perceptions of colour are the means of our perception of visible figure." (Stewart in a letter to Reid, Dissertation, pp. 133-134.)

retina in vision." "On the retina" cannot be Reid's answer to the question "Where is visible figure?" He often remarks with obvious truth that we never see the retinas of our eyes or anything on them. One would have supposed from the other things that Reid said that he located visible figure on the surface of the eye. The boy who was 'couched' by Cheselden and whose reports of what he saw as soon as he was able to see were seized on eagerly by everybody, including Reid, with questions concerning perception which they wanted empirically settled, reported, it was understood by Reid, that he first saw colours and shapes up against his eyes.

Visible figure would not be the sign of anything to the blind man. To other men it is a sign of the real figure of the thing they are looking at. They do not look at it, never notice it. We do not see the book on the table across the room as a two-dimensional patch of colour about the size of a hand; We see it in its three dimensions and the size it is. The appearance of things constitute a visual language, which once learnt and familiar, takes us straight to the things its signs signify as though we perceived these things "without the intervention of any sign".[I.]

The perception of real figure through visible figure as its sign is an 'acquired perception'. The perception of visible figure (if we attend to it so as to perceive it) is an 'original' perception. The perception of real figure by touch is an 'original' perception. Inacquired perceptions original perceptions become signs. Reid has nothing new to say on the manner in which aequired perceptions are acquired. The principle is that the proper objects of one sense are found by experience to be connected with the proper objects of another sense, and so become their customary signs. Reid substantially repeats from Berkeley and the optical writers of the time their account of the education of vision to

I. Inquiry, Ch. VI, Sec.XIX, p.182.

a perception of distance and of the real shape and size of objects at a distance. Reid is especially anxious to insist on the psychological immediacy of acquired visual perception. Custom "by a kind of legerdemain" has withdrawn the "original and proper objects of sight" and has put in their place "objects of touch, which have length, and thickness, and a determinate distance from the eye".[1] The senses of smell and hearing perceive distance and locality after a similar though simpler schooling.

Acquired perceptions extend beyond the substitution of the proper objects of one sense for those of another. The perception that this is the smell of a rose and that the sound of a passing coach are acquired perceptions.

Perception has its anatomical conditions and its physiological antecedents. Reid's general attitude to these is that they create no problems and solve no problems of what would now be called 'philosophical' interest - perception is an "act of the mind". In particular there are two things to be said. The first is that while it is a fact of our constitution that perception does not take place without the appropriate sense organ and unless certain physiological events have taken place, we have no reason at all to suppose that these events are in any way 'efficient' causes of perception, that they transmit anything, do anything, to the mind as a result of which the act of perception takes place. (This is Reid's deliberate view, though he sometimes speaks casually of the body as 'acting on' the mind.) Reid, however, has no scheme of occasionalism or pre-established harmony. The impression one gathers from his published writings is that it is part of his metaphysical abstinence to have no theory on the relation of body and mind. In the MS. Lectures on the Fine Arts[2] he has opinions that are definite enough: There is much to be said for occasionalism but "it has been carried greatly too far". There is a plain contradiction in asserting that God does, and that the human mind

1. Inquiry, Ch VI, Sec.XIX, R.p.182.
2. Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS I76, pp.2I-23.

cannot, act on matter. Both are spirits. If we think that the mind acts on the body, we are probably not mistaken. We are almost certainly mistaken if we think that the body acts on the mind. It does not seem possible that any of the modes of material action of which we have any knowledge could have effects in other than material things.

The second consideration for emphasis with regard to the anatomical and physiological conditions of perception is their complete arbitrariness as far as we can tell. For all we know, we might have been made so as to "taste with our fingers, to smell with our ears, and to hear by the nose".[I.] We might have been so made as to,have all the sensations and perceptions we do have with no sense organs at all, or without any of the occurrences in nerves and brain which begin with changes in them. Sensations follow unaccountably upon the transmission of impressions from the sense organs to the brain; perception upon sensation, unaccountably. There is not one link in the chain of events from the impression on the sense organ to the final perception of which we can be sure that it had to be what it was for the result to be what it was.

"We might, perhaps, have been made of such a constitution as to have our present perceptions connected with other sensations. We might, perhaps, have had the perception of external objects, without either impressions upon the organs of sense, or sensations. Or, lastly, The perceptions we have, might have been immediately connected with the impressions upon our organs, without any intervention of sensations."[2.] One thing is certain: If we had the sensations alone or

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I. Inquiry,Ch.VI, Sec.XXI, p.I87.

2. Inquiry,Ch.VI, Sec.XXI. p.I87. A speculative agnosticism as to the significance of the anatomical and physiological conditions of perception is a characteristic of the philosophy of Common Sense. Stewart gives a muted version of Reid. (Elements,Vol.I, Ch.I,). The following is from a note-book of Beattie's (Aberdeen MSS., B22) "Our sould may, perhaps, be not really assisted in external perception by the respective organs of sense, but only hindered from it by the other parts of our body: the ears, for example, may possibly be, not parts of our body enabling the mind to hear, but only the sole parts of our body which do not obstruct hearing; and which can admit those impressions of sound, that a disembodied spirit might receive immediately."

the impressions and sensations alone we would have been merely sentient and not percipient beings, unable to form even the conception of external objects.

The perception of an object "implies" both a conception of it and "a belief of its present existence".[I.] According to Reid, Hamilton comments, "perception is only the conception (imagination) of an object, accompanied with a belief of its present existence". This could hardly be Reid's view. It would commit him to holding that any belief in the present existence of anything is a perception of it, since he holds that every belief implies a conception of its object. Hamilton takes the statement he is commenting on out of the whole context of sensations as natural signs in which Reid's doctrine of perception is really set. He has a good deal of excuse; the section in the Inquiry and the chapter in the Intellectual Powers, each with the heading "Of Perception", are misleadingly written out of context. Reid does not say in either that perception is merely a matter of conception and belief, but he could not say what more there is to it if sensations are to be left out of it. And therefore he cannot say that we might have all the perceptions we do have "without any intervention of sensations". Sensations are part of the essential structure of perception; the conception and belief of an external object which are aspects of it, are aspects of the operation of sensations as natural signs.

There is, however, a puzzling remark in this section from the Inquiry. It suggests - and there are half-hints elsewhere to the same effect - that Reid might have had two views on the nature of perception. "I am conscious of this act of my mind [the act of perception], and I can reflect upon it; but it is too simple to admit of an analysis, and I cannot find proper words to describe it." The theory of natural signs with acquired or original meanings is an analysis of perception. If there is a different view of the nature of perception here, it is

I. Inquiry, Ch.VI, Sec.XX, p.183.

the view that all that can be said of perception itself is that it is perception. It is a type of view which Reid always found philosophically attractive. There are in fact a number of features in this section of the Inquiry which are less characteristic of the Inquiry than of the Intellectual Powers where natural signs are much more rarely spoken of.

In one part of the Intellectual Powers where Reid deals at length with sensations as signs he speaks inconsistently of what it is that they signify. The chapter "Of Sensation" begins with the familiar doctrine that sensations signify objects of perception. The word 'smell', 'taste' 'sound' are words for "a sensation and a quality perceived by means of that sensation. The first is the sign, the last the thing signified. As both are conjoined by nature, and as the purposes of common life do not require them to be disjoined in our thoughts, they are both expressed by the same name." (p.310). The qualities perceived by touch are perceived "by means of a sensation which indicates them" (p.311). On the next page, after references to the real complexity of some operations of the mind under their apparent simplicity, Reid says that sensation signifies perception, plainly meaning the act and not the object: "Every different perception is conjoined with a sensation that is proper to it. The one is the sign, the other the thing signified. They coalesce in our imagination. They are signified by one name, and are considered as one simple operation. The purposes of life do not require them to be distinguished" (p.312). There is nothing elsewhere in Reid to elucidate the statement that sensation is a sign of perception, or to show its relation to the doctrine that sensations are the signs of external objects. The failure by philosophers to distinguish between sensation and perception, Reid remarks here, has occasioned most of their mistakes with regard to the senses.

The most serious of these mistakes is to think that the objects of the senses

are always internal objects - as they would be if sensation was perception - never external objects. When Reid calls the object of perception an "external" object he means that it is an object which does not depend for its existence on being perceived. In a draft of the first volume of the Elements which he sent to Reid, Stewart has one criticism to make of Reid's doctrine of perception. Reid understood the criticism to be that he had not distinguished between an "independent" existence and a "permanent" existence and had implied that by the senses we are equally and immediately aware of both. (I think you will have a just notion of the defect you mention", Reid tells Stewart, "if you distinguish bet between an independent existence and a permanent existence.")

Reid's reply is: "My sense do not testify that the sun and moon continue to exist when I do not perceive them. For anything my senses testify, they might have been created the moment I perceived them and annihilated the moment after. If I have anywhere made their existence when I perceived them not, to be the testimony of my senses as distinguished from all my other powers, I think it is an error. But I do not remember that I have done this." He has never, he explains tried to give a reason for our belief in the continued existence of the things we perceive because he did not know of anyone who "ever acknowledged a real external e existence of the objects of sense when perceived and at the same time denied their existence when they are not perceived". The perception of an object is the perception of it as external, just as the consciousness of any of the operations of the mind is a consciousness of it as internal.[1]

Presumably Reid sent his ~~documents~~ comments to Stewart. In the Elements as it now stands, (in the first edition as well as in subsequent editions) Reid's doctrine of perception is given the completion Stewart considers it needs in order to be "completely satisfactory". Reid "has shewn that certain sensations are, by a law of nature, accompanied with an irresistible belief of the existence of certain qualities of external objects. But this law extends no farther than to the present existence of quality; that is , to its existence while we feel the corresponding

1. "Criticism and Remarks on Stewart's "Elements"", Aberdeen MSS. 2131.4.

sensation. Whence is it, then, that we ascribe to the quality an existence independent of our perception? I apprehend we learn to do this by experience alone. We find that we cannot, as in the case of imagination, dismiss or recall the perception of an external object. If I open my eyes, I cannot prevent myself from seeing the prospect which is before me. I learn, therefore to ascribe to the object of my senses, not only an existence at the time I perceive them, but an independent and a permanent existence."[I.]

If we learn by experience to ascribe to the objects of perception both an "independent" and a "permanent" existence, perception by itself does nothing to show its irrelevance to the existence of its objects. It does not occur to Stewart that he is abolishing Reid's theory of perception; he thinks he is correcting an incidental mistake.

We have now before us the materials on which to decide whether Reid's theory of perception is a theory of direct perception. Reid's theory of "original" perception is a theory of sensations as natural signs (with the anomaly of visible figure as an object of perception without a sensation to signify it). His theory of "acquired" perception is a theory of original perceptions as natural signs. Is the perception of things through their natural signs direct perception of them? How do natural signs present the mind with the things they signify? They "suggest" them Reid has other words, He does say that natural signs "introduce" the things they signify, that they "present" them;[2.] fairly often that they "indicate" them. But "suggest" is much his most unusual word. And it might seem hard to imagine how perception could be made out to be more devious, subjective and uncertain than by being made out to be the result of "suggestion".

"I beg leave to make use of the word suggestion, because I know not one more proper, to express a power of the mind, which seems entirely to have escaped the

I. Ch.III, p.153. Cp. Philosophical Essays, II, Ch.II, Sec.I, pp.105-106, where our belief in the "permanent" existence of an object perceived is accounted for as an instance of our general belief in the uniformity of nature.
2. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.II, p.120; Sec.IV, p123.

notice of philosophers, and to which we owe many of our simple notions which are neither impressions nor ideas, as well as many original principles of belief. I shall endeavour to illustrate, by an example, what I understand by this word. We all know, that a certain kind of sound suggests immediately to the mind, a coach passing in the street; and not only produces the imagination, but the belief, that a coach is passing."[1]

Mr. Winch has demonstrated so thoroughly the impropriety of the word 'suggestion', in one of its standard uses, to the contexts in which Reid uses the word,[2] that if Reid could have seen the demonstration, he would probably have wished that he had used some other term instead to mean what he meant by 'suggestion'. As Winch points out, (pp.329ff.) the circumstances in which we would say "I hear a sound that suggests a passing coach" are circumstances in which we would not say "I hear a coach". We say the first when we know that what we hear is not a coach but something which suggests a passing coach - pine cones blown over a frozen ground in winter - is Winch's example; or when the sound might be the sound of a coach but we are quite unsure whether it is. Again, to adapt one of Winch's examples, if you are looking at a camel and are asked "What does that suggest to you? you might say "All the romance of the desert" - something of this sort - anything but "A camel". That is something you would perhaps say only if the sight of the camel suggested nothing to you at all. If a thing suggests another thing to us, it makes us imagine it, as the sound of the pine cones makes us imagine a coach or the sight of a camel makes us imagine something which is not a camel. There is normally no place for belief. If we are listening for the coach and hear a sound which suggests it, a sound which might be the sound of the coach, there is perhaps a flicker of belief, but no more than that. The notions then of 'perception' and of 'suggestion' "fall quite apart" (p.336).

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1. Inquiry, Ch. II, Sec.VII, p.III,
2. "The Notion of 'Suggestion' in Thomas Reid's Theory of Perception", Philosophical Quarterly, Oct. 1953.

Winch anticipates an objection. His argument against Reid is based on twentieth century usage of the word 'suggest'; Reid was "discussing" eighteenth usage; and the two usages might have diverged widely enough to invalidate the argument. The possibility can be ruled out. If the "use of 'suggest' in Reid's environment corresponded to his own philosophical usage, the difference from our current usage would be so marked as to make us want to say that the whole concept of 'perception' had radically altered in the last ywo hundred years". An alteration of such magnitude could not have gone unnoticed.

It is not Winch's contention that Reid's theory of perception is "nonsense"; his contention is that Reid's theory is false (p.336). False, because it implies that all perception is doubtful perception, that expressions of the form "I hear, see, taste, ...something which suggests X" are always more appropriate than the simple statement that I hear, see ....X. "Philosophical theories of the type of Reid's have an attractive appearance because of their air of caution and 'taking nothing for granted'; but this obsessive over-caution, far from being a merit, results in an obscuration of the linguistic distinctions which enable us to discriminate between conditions where caution is necessary, and those where it is not." (p.331).

To establish his contention Winch should have been building up evidence that Reiduses the word 'suggests', with the ordinary meaning which Winch's examples illustrate, in an extraordinary context. Had the word been in Reid's theory with all these familiar implications of subjectivity and uncertainty, this would have been enough to show that Reid's theory is the thorough misinterpretation of the facts of perception that Winch thinks it is. It is not in Reid's theory with these implications. To take an essential point: We can have by perceptual 'suggestion', Reid maintains, and usually do, an irresistible conviction of the existence of the object of perception. The irresistibility of the belief involved in

original perception is implicit throughout Reid's discussion of the nature of perception - it is after all his final answer to philosophical doubts about an external world. Having introduced the term with the explanation already quoted, Reid goes on to mention the range of its application "... sensation suggests the notion of present existence, and the belief that what we perceive or feel does now exist....memory suggests the notion of past existence, and the belief that what we remember did exist in time past ....our sensations and thoughts do also suggest the notion of a mind, and the belief of its existence, and of its relation to our thoughts....any change in nature, suggests to us the notion of a cause, and compels our belief of its existence." By the "natural principle" of suggestion we have all these beliefs; all of them beliefs of common sense; all of them therefore irresistible.

If there is a single standard use for 'suggests', and it is the use described by Winch, then the word is in Reid's theory of perception with hardly a trace of its proper meaning. There is, however, a less common but not uncommon use of 'suggests' in which the word does not carry any implications of doubt or hesitation. Reid's employment of the word seems to have at least some affinities with this use. I may be quite sure of something and then ask What suggested that to me? (I knew she was a school-teacher. What made me think so? What suggested to me that she was?) Granted that X suggests Y, there are two questions we might ask. We might ask What does X suggest? What suggested Y? The second seems to be Reid's question. And in confirmation: The first question could not be asked unless X is noticed. The sound of a passing coach could not easily go unnoticed; but many natural signs suggest the things they signify in self-effacement: They most perfectly conform to Reid's conception of a natural sign when they do.

Reid unfortunately did not discuss the way the word 'suggests' is used. He borrowed the word unconsciously from Berkeley employing it, Stewart remarks, as

a technical term. And not in the interests of philosophical caution. Reid's theory, at least of original perception, is too incautious. How can you misunderstand a completely familiar word? Natural signs in original perception are like completely familiar words. How can they be misunderstood if there are such things as these natural signs at all? Words well understood in familiar contexts may be misunderstood in unfamiliar contexts. We learn the perceptual meaning of signs of the first class in a comparatively narrow range of contexts, and consequently are always liable to mistakes in acquired perception.

With the misunderstanding which the word 'suggestion' invites for Reid's theory out of the way, we can ask again whether it is a theory of direct perception. To begin with perception by touch. We feel the shape, the solidity, the smoothness or roughness of whatever it is we are holding; feel them, Reid says, by means of the sensation of touch. What would it be for perception by touch to be more direct than it is on Reid's account of it? But will the theory of natural signs fit Reid's descriptive account of perception by touch? The theory itself explains why it must appear inappropriate, for it is a theory of the psychological directness and the logical indirectness of perceptual experience, and because the first isaa feature of the experience, the second does not appear as a feature of it. Consequently, the 'transition' of the mind from the sign to what it signifies, the induced conception and belief 'suggested' by the sign are bound to seem misdescriptions of the familiar simplicity of the experience. Natural signs operate here as if they did not exist.

In nineteenth century discussions of Reid, as in Hamilton, for example, and Mill, passages which seemed to be assertions of direct perception were set alongside passages which seemed to be assertions of indirect perception, and Reid's inconsistency pointed out. The indirect passages all belong to the exposition of

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Reid's theory of perception. The contrasted passages assert that it is things themselves that we perceive and not their representatives in the mind. There is no reason to suppose that Reid would have acknowledged any inconsistency between them, that he would have been willing to change either the theory or the assertions of direct perception. The theory authorizes them. We see and handle material things, Reid says. The indirectness in perception which the theory recognizes does not rule out this plain speech, and the psychological immediacy which it also recognizes demands it.

Visible figure does not fit Reid's theory. He has no explanations. It is just a fact that there is no sensation by which it is signified, and therefore no analysis of what it is to see it. There is an analysis of what it is to see the real figure of a thing. It is similar to the analysis of the perception of real figure by touch, with this difference that the perceptual sign is not a sensation and its signification has to be learnt. To ask for real figure to be seen more directly perceived by sight than it is, is to ask for the abolition of the laws of perspective.

The objects of perception are external objects. It may not be easy or even possible to show how the perception of tangible or visible figure could be more direct than Reid makes them out to be. If a theory of the direct perception of the 'secondary qualities' ~~are~~ was wanted, it would be provided by any theory which held that what Reid calls the 'sensations' of colour, sound, smell and taste are external objects, that is objects which exist independently of our experience of them. In calling them sensations Reid claims that he is giving them the name that their nature requires. The external objects corresponding to them, signified by them, and therefore perceived through them are their occult 'causes' or 'occasions' in material things.

I. Among them Mill gives prominence to Reid's remarks on sensations as premisses, physical objects as conclusions, and the unique logic of signification which connects them deductively. (Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p.213.)

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When Reid is attacking the theory of ideas, Thomas Brown remarks, he will not allow that a thing can be said to be perceived if only its effects are perceived.[1] When the polemic is over and Reid is expounding his own theory, he is expounding the theory of ideas.[2]

The theory of ideas in its simplest form, in which no entities are multiplied, and in which to perceive an external object is to refer a sensation to its external cause. This, according to Brown, is all that perception is when it is more than sensation, the perception of the primary qualities of matter equally with perception of its secondary qualities. There is a distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of matter: we define matter in terms of incompressibility and extension. These are therefore to us its primary qualities, but all we know of them is that from them we have "feelings of resistance" and "feelings of extension," as all we know of its secondary qualities is that from them we have other kinds of sensation. Nevertheless we have an irresistible belief that matter exists independently of us, a belief which primitively depends on the feeling of resistance. Our experience of extension by itself would leave us without the notion of external existence, being in origin nothing but the experience of succession in muscular feelings. It is a feeling of resistance interrupting a familiar series of muscular feelings (something impeding the free movement of a limb) which first makes us aware of an external object - as a feeling of resistance it compels our belief that it has a cause which is independent of ourselves. Then by association with this feeling extension and our other sensations are brought to have external reference.[3]

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.VIII, p.
2. Brown, The Philosophy of the Human Mind, p.160.
3. The Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lectures XXIV - XXVII. There are some statements in these lectures and elsewhere in Brown which are not easily reconciled with his general doctrine that our knowledge of matter in all its properties is essentially "relative" (in Reid's sense of the term, Brown explains) to its effects on us in sensation.

3. Perceptual Relativity

It is, Hume acknowledges, the natural belief of all men that we perceive external objects immediately.

"But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: it was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent."[I.]

We have to distinguish, Reid says, between 'real' and 'apparent' magnitude, between the size a thing is and the size it looks. The concept of real magnitude is primarily a concept of touch. Apparent magnitude is seen not touched. Except in astronomy whose objects of study are beyond the reach of touch, apparent magnitude had no name until Berkeley gave it one. He called it 'visible magnitude'. It had no name because it was unnoticed, serving only as a sign of real magnitude and distance. In the sense in which visible magnitude is seen, real magnitude is never seen. Similarly we do not hear coaches or bells in the sense in which we

I. Inquiry, Sec.XII, Pt.I, p.152.

hear sounds. It would be absurd to say simply that we never hear a coach or a bell. We hear them and even at a distance or close at hand. Usage is the arbiter of speech and usage has prescribed the same word for original and acquired perception.[1]

We are now in a position to consider Hume's sceptical argument. "The table we see seems to diminish as we remove farther from it... but the real table suffers no alteration.... therefore, it is not the real table we see."[2] Reid admits the premisses and denies the conclusion. Restated and freed from their ambiguity, the premisses point to the opposite conclusion. The table seems to diminish, "that is, its apparent magnitude is diminished"; suffers no alteration "in its real magnitude". Suppose for the moment that we do see the real table. "Must not this real table seem to diminish as we remove farther from it? It is demonstrable that it must. How then can this apparent diminution be an argument that it is not the real table? When that which must happen to the real table, as we remove farther from it, does actually happen to the table we see, it is absurd to conclude from this, that it is not the real table we see."[3]

The disagreement between Reid and Hume is only half verbal. There is an implied real disagreement over the status of visible figure. To Reid visible figure is an external object, an object which can exist unseen. In Hume's opinion it is nothing when it is not seen. His argument has no tendency to show that Reid is mistaken. Of course, as Reid continually reminds us, we do not pay any attention to visible figure; it is of no importance to us except as a sign. Whether or not, then, it exists independently of us would hardly seem to be a matter which concerns common sense.

Reid cannot allow it to be a matter of no consequence to common sense. It is a conviction of common sense that we see external objects and do not merely infer them from something else that we do see. Reid has a theory which has to be

1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XXII, p.336.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XIV, p.304.
3. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch. XIV, p.304.

squared with this conviction. His theory is that we do not see 'real' figure in the sense in which we see 'visible' figure. (Hume's argument is an argument for this theory.) If we do not, then unless visible figure exists when it is not seen, no external object is seen in the primary sense of the word. We can properly say that we see the real shape and size of a thing and as properly and more illuminatingly, Reid maintains, we can say that we judge of its real shape and size, infer them, from its visual appearances. Seeing a thing's real shape and size is not something different from judging or inferring its real shape and size from its visual appearances. This is what seeing the real shape and size is.

Plain men surely think that they see the table in the primary sense of 'see', in the sense in which they see visible figure. They are not likely to be satisfied by being told that they see an external object but not the external object that they think they see. And is not this what they are being told by Reid in defence of their common sense? Not necessarily, provided that Reid is prepared to say a thing has as many different shapes as there are different positions from which it might be seen.

It is something we may choose to say, something which will be neither true nor false. It is not something covered by the testimony of nature. Nature's speech in the matter ends with the fiat that a thing cannot have different shapes in the one place which it occupies. The generality of the statement that a thing has as many shapes as there are positions from which it might be seen is objectionable because we want to speak of the real shape (by which we mean either the shape in virtue of which the thing has its 'apparent' shapes or the most familiar of these). But "the tower looks from here as if it has the shape of a pepper pot", "has the shape of a pepper-pot from here" are idiomatic alternatives. If we are making a philosophical choice between them we can choose whichever makes us more comfortable.

Reid would prefer the former; nothing is to impair the primacy of tangible

figure. It is the real figure of a thing, though we need to be reminded that the spatial conceptions we have even from touch may be no more than fragmentary. The reminder precedes a discussion of Berkeley's argument that touch and sight report conflictingly concerning the shape of a thing, that we have no reason to accept the information of one sense rather than that of the other, and must therefore regard both tangible and visible figure as ideal. One would expect Reid to reply to Berkeley as he had to Hume. He does so with a cryptic introduction. Berkeley's argument, he says, "loses all its force, if it be true, as was formerly hinted, that visible figure and extension are only a partial conception, and the tangible figure and extension a more complete conception of that figure and extension which is really in the object".[1] In the passage (p.325.) referred back to, Reid has said that a being with more senses than we have might have a more complete conception of space than we have, just as we have a more complete conception of space from touch than we do from sight.

How are these considerations supposed to be relevant to the refutation of Berkeley? Sight gives us the conception of a two-dimensional space, touch adds a third dimension, and we have a space in which the laws of perspective will apply. The visible appearances of things are governed by these laws and are found by sight to be what by these laws they must be. The testimonies of sight and touch are consequently mutually corroborative. It is hard to imagine anything else that Reid might have had in mind.

Beattie repeats Reid. The distinction between tangible and visible figure and magnitude is valuable to Beattie chiefly because, without it, the senses cannot be cleared of the charge that they are fallacious. And it is a principle of common sense that "things are as they appear to the senses to be"; the correction of every mistake in perception depends upon it.[2] The tower seems to be no bigger than

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1. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XIX, p.326.
2. Immutable Truth, Pt. I, Ch.II, Sec.II, p.66.

your thumb. How is this 'sensation' to be reconciled with your belief that the tower is fifty feet high? There is no difficulty: tangible magnitude is the object of your belief, visible magnitude of your sensation. "When we see a lump of salt at a little distance, we may perhaps take it for sugar. Is this a false sensation? is this a proof, either that our taste, or that our sight is fallacious? No: this is only an erroneous opinion formed upon a true sensation. A false sensation we cannot suppose it to be, without supposing that tastes are perceived by the eyes. And you cannot believe your opinion of the magnitude of these towers to be a false sensation, except you believe that tangible qualities are perceived by sight. When we speak of the magnitude of objects, we generally mean the tangible magnitude, which is no more an object of sight than of hearing."[I.]

Fallacies of the senses. It is from philosophers, Reid reflects, that one hears of these rather than from ordinary men. Still a man who has had a counterfeit coin passed off on him might complain that his senses had deceived him. We can find ordinary uses for the phrase 'a fallacy of the senses'. Yet would we mean that the senses have deceived us? Thoughtlessly perhaps. Reid remembers talking to a man who was not satisfied with the refutation of the doctrine of Transubstantiation by an appeal to the testimony of the senses: Any one of the senses can deceive us, How do we know that there are not times when they are all deceiving us? Reid asked for an instance of the concurrence of several senses in deception. Clay, he was told, could be moulded into the shape of an apple, painted and dabbed with essence of apple - there is a thing which to sight, touch and smell is an apple. The senses testify, Reid answered, that the thing has the shape, colour and smell of an apple, and it has. If I conclude that because this thing has some of the qualities of an apple, that it is an apple, my mistake is a mistake of unjustified inference.

I. Immutable Truth, Pt.II, Ch.I, Sec.II, p.173.

In Reid's alternative language the mistake is a misinterpretation of natural signs whose signification has been learnt by experience, but which are not exclusively connected with the things they have been found to signify. Almost every experiment in optics, Reid remarks, to a man who knows nothing of optics must make him think that he cannot trust his eyes. We are no longer surprised to see our reflection in a mirror, but how could a man be more grossly imposed on by his sight than to see himself in front of himself? Yet to anyone acquainted with the principles of optics, this surprising appearance constitutes part of the "visual language" of nature. He understands this language and knows that there is no deception in it, nothing at all misleading. We need to have discovered the context of nature's speech not to misunderstand it or find it ambiguous. Thus in vision, "the same appearance to the eye, may, in different circumstances, indicate different things. Therefore, when the circumstances are unknown upon which the interpretation of the sign depends, their meaning must be ambiguous; and when the circumstances are mistaken, the meaning of the signs must also be mistaken.

"This is the case in all the phaenomena which we call fallacies of the senses; and particularly in those which are called fallacies in vision. The appearance of things to the eye always corresponds to the fixed laws of Nature; therefore, if we speak properly, there is no fallacy in the senses. Nature always speaketh the same language, and useth the same signs in the same circumstances; but we sometimes mistake the meaning of the signs, either through ignorance of the laws of Nature, or through ignorance of the circumstances which attend the signs."[1]

The deceptions of sense which most nearly deserve the name are those which are due to disordered sense: the sour taste of sweet wine to the sick, the pain felt in the toes after a leg has been cut off, everything yellowed in jaundice. But what does one expect from a disordered instrument?[2] Nature has constituted our

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1. Inquiry, Ch.VI, SecXXIII, p.194.
2. Have we any criteria for deciding when a sense is not disordered? Beattie has a list: Are the perceptions communicated by a sense "clear and definite",

sensations signs of external objects only under certain conditions. The conditions are impressions made by the object signified upon sense-organs and through them upon nerves and brain. The sensation follows its immediate antecedent, the impression on the brain, whatever the antecedents of the impression on the brain. When the remoter antecedents of the sensation are not those which nature has established for the perception of an object, the sensation will be a false perceptual sign.[1] (The meaning then of the signs even in original perception is a contextual meaning, as that for all their familiarity, they can be misinterpreted.) The sensation itself, apart from its reference can have no falsity in it, and the philosophers who hold the theory of ideas should, in Reid's opinion, withdraw their complaints about the unreliability of the senses. "If the senses testify nothing, they cannot give false testimony." They testify nothing, if their office is "only to give us the ideas of external objects".[2]

It is part of the human condition that all our faculties are liable to damage or disturbance which unfits them for their natural functions, but as this vulnerability is common to them all, it is no justification for singling out the senses as unreliable. Philosophers have traditionally singled them out, and to this mistake they have usually added another; they have usually held that one of functions of reason is to detect the fallacies of sense. (The senses are levellers reason puts a proper distance between philosophers and the rest of mankind.) We are in fact as much exposed to error in the use of our reason as in the use of our senses, and the errors we do fall into "with regard to objects of sense are not corrected by reason, but by more accurate attention to the informations we may receive by our senses themselves".[3]

"uniformly similar in similar circumstances", compatible with the "perceptions of my other faculties", with other men's perceptions, able to be acted on with security ? (Immutable Truth, Pt. II, Ch. I, Sec. II, pp.I98-I99.)

I. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XVIII, pp.320-32I.
2. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XXII, p.339.
3. Intellectual Powers, II, Ch.XXII, p.339.

The relativity of sensations does not disturb the common sense belief in the absolute existence of physical objects, does not hint at the possibility of a metaphysical fallacy of the senses, their representing to us as independent objects, objects which are dependent on us. On the contrary, when a man "feels the same water hot to one hand and cold to the other, this gives him occasion to distinguish between the feeling and the heat of the body; and, although he knows that the sensations are contrary, he does not imagine that the body can have contrary qualities at the same time. And when he finds a different taste in the same body in sickness and in health, he is easily convinced, that the quality in the body called taste[I.] is the same as before, although the sensations he has from it are perhaps opposite."

Reid has not discussed the significance of the different information which we have from different organs of touch (the hole in a tooth which feels large to the tongue and small to the finger); has not shown how this relativity is no impediment to our acquaintance with the tangible qualities of a thing as they are in themselves. The relativity of sensations could carry no threat to the small absolute he claims for its secondary qualities.

I. Inquiry, Ch.II, Sec.IX, ppII3-II4.

CHAPTER VI PERSONAL IDENTITY AND FREE WILL

I. Personal Identity

Among Reid's manuscripts there is a fragment of philosophy which is not yet fully Common Sense. Reid is asking what the self is. "I mean not now to enquire whether I am body or spirit, whether substance or accident, but what is the I concerning which these enquiries may be made?" .....The succession of ideas "I can divide and separate. But I cannot so much as suppose myself divided or separated. Yet when the train of ideas is taken away what remains? I confess I know not....I seem to have no idea of it and yet am under an invincible necessity of believing there is some such thing."[I.] The fragment ends there, and if Reid returned to the problem of a metaphysically neutral meaning for 'the self', no trace of his enquiry has survived. The philosophy of Common Sense will not allow the ignorance that is necessary in order to be able to ask the question Reid wished to ask. It will not allow even a provisional doubt as to whether the self is "substance or accident", that any meaning can be found for 'I', such that we can fix what it is we are speaking of, and then proceed to enquire into its category. Otherwise the ignorance confessed in the fragment is the ignorance taught by the philosophy of Common Sense, and the argument against the self as a succession of ideas is the argument of the philosophy of Common Sense.

Sensations are doubly natural signs; they signify their objects and they signify their subject. Different sensations signify different external things; all sensations signify the same internal thing, the self to which they all belong. Our sensations "suggest to us a sentient being or mind to which they belong - a being which hath a permanent existence, although the sentations are transient and of short duration - a being which is still the same, while its sensations and other operations are varied ten thousand ways - a being which hath the same

I. Aberdeen MSS., 213I.4. The piece of paper is dated October 22, 1748.

relation to all that infinite variety of thoughts, purposes, actions, affections, enjoyments, and sufferings, which we are conscious of, or can remember. The conception of a mind is neither an idea of sensation nor of reflection; for it is neither like any of our sensations, nor like anything we are conscious of. The first conception of it, as well as the belief of it, and of the common relation it bears to all that we are conscious of, or remember, is suggested to every thinking being, we do not knowhow."[1]

"It must be from some one impression that the idea of the self is obtained, if it is to pass for clear and intelligible." No, Reid says, not from any impression, not in the way that Hume meant. But when Hume said that there was no 'impression' of the self, he was not mistaken. If all the objects of consciousness were to file past consciousness, the self would not be among them. Hume gave reasons why the self must be absent from this procession and claimed that experiment confirmed its absence. Reid and Stewart, who agree with one another on this matter, do not report negative results from an introspective experiment, nor do they give a priori reasons for ruling out the self as a possible object of consciousness.

The objects of consciousness are "our present pains, our pleasures, our hopes, our fears, our desires, our doubts, our thoughts of every kind; in a word, all the passions, and all the actions and operations of our own minds, while they are present".[2] Is there no consciousness of the self because the self is not a transitory object? This cannot be the reason. Like perception and unlike memory, consciousness must have objects that are contemporary with its act. Perception has permanent objects, though perception as such knows nothing of their past and future. For the same reason, and if nothing else prevented it,

1. Inquiry, Ch.V, Sec.III, p.122.
2. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch.V, p.442. In Reid's view, we are (effortlessly) conscious of everything that goes on in our minds; We can 'reflect' upon the objects of consciousness as well as upon those of perception, that is consider them attentively, and without this reflection our notions of them must be more or less vague. (Intellectual Powers, I, Ch.V, p.239; VI, Ch.V, p.443.).

there could be a consciousness of the self, though no consciousness of its permanence, any more than we are conscious that its operations are fugitive.

In restricting the range of consciousness to the present, Reid claims to be using the term with philosophical precision, without the least criticism of the laxer use of it in everyday speech. We say in everyday speech that we saw a thing move. And correctly. It would be ridiculous to find fault with a way of speaking which is the ordinary way and has a perfectly clear meaning. By 'the present' philosophers mean the point of time dividing the future from the past. By 'the present' we mean in everyday life a variable period of time going back into the past and on into the future. There is a before and after in motion. Therefore, speaking philosophically, we do not see a thing move; speaking with the vulgar, we do. Neither of these forms of speech is more correct than the other - to use a term 'laxly' is to use it correctly where precision would be out of place - and both are needed for different purposes. Similarly there is no occasion "in common discourse, to fix accurately the limits between consciousness and memory". If this is not done in philosophy "we confound the different powers of the mind, and ascribe to one what really belongs to another".[I.]

We are not conscious of the self Reid and Stewart say. They do not say why, nor indicate how they would set about arguing a man out of the mistaken belief that the self was one of the things of which he was conscious (provided he was not claiming to be conscious of its identity through time). Is it perhaps a mistake which is bound to arise with the states of the self as natural signs of the self? Natural signs are unnoticed, are so unobtrusive that the mind seems to be as directly aware of the objects they signify to it as if the signs were altogether absent.

If the states of the self are its natural signs, they are natural signs

I. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.VI, p.351.

without this transparency. They do not concentrate all the attention on the thing they signify, but on themselves; they are not effaced before the featureless substance of the self. Their analogies with natural signs which operate in perception would be with those which signify the secondary qualities of bodies. And in a further respect: Those natural signs signify something occult, and the states of the self signify something occult. We know nothing of the being of the mind absolutely; our conception of it is of it simply as the subject of its powers and operations. This is Reid's and Stewart's strong opinion. They may have held it to be an obvious consequence that the self, the mind as subject, is not an object of consciousness; we could not know by consciousness that a thing is, without knowing what it is.

The sensations from the secondary qualities are signs signifying their unknown causes. Is the understanding of these signs any more than a particular application of the general principle of causation? It is a little more; it is to infer a cause whose _esse_ is not _percipi_. That the states of the self signify the self seems to be no more than an instance of the principle that anything not itself a substance must belong to one . In the _Intellectual Powers_ this principle, no longer disguised by the language of sign and signification, is straightforwardly the principle upon which we refer the states of the self to their subject. There are some things which show that they cannot exist without belonging to something else, in the special sense of 'belonging to' which is technically called 'inherence in a subject'. Motion, for example, must be the motion of something, shape the shape of something[I.] - all the 'immediate' objects of perception are qualities of material substance, bound to it by the essential incompleteness of their being.

I. Visible figure? If asked about the category of visible figure, Reid has said in the _Inquiry_, the best he could do by way of an answer was to list its characteristics, so that those who were familiar with the categories could decide for themselves where to place it. He gives thelist and adds the remark that wherever "a projection of the sphere" or a perspective drawing have "their lodgings in the categories", visible figure "will be found to dwell next door". (_Inquiry_, CH. VI, Sec. VIII, p.144).

And similarly another substance is presupposed in the existence of everything of which we are conscious. Anyone denying that extension, figure, size...require a subject to which they belong; that thought, feeling, desire...require a subject to which they belong is beyond argument as a man who "denies first principles". He will, however, find, if he reflects, that the structure of his speech contradicts him.[1]

Stewart is always sparing with the language of sign and signification, and does not use it in the present connection. Upon the occurrence of any sensation "we learn two facts at once; the existence of the sensation, and our own existence as sentient beings - in other words, the very exercise of consciousness necessarily implies a belief, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of _that_ which feels and thinks; or (to employ plainer language) the present existence of that being which I denote by the words _I_ and _myself_. Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can properly be said to be conscious, agreeably to the rigorous interpretation of the expression."[2] But as in every sensation, in every experience, there is immediately implicit a reference to the self, it is not surprising that we should read this habitual inference from the facts of consciousness into the facts of consciousness.

The _Cogito, ergo sum_, Stewart adds does not "deserve _all_ the ridicule" that has been poured upon it. By Beattie, for instance. Could anything be absurder than that anyone should try to prove his own existence? When Milton's Adam woke from the sleep which followed his creation, one of his first thoughts, Beattie remarks, was to enquire into the cause of his existence. In Dryden's improvment upon Milton, Adam is obliged to "prove his existence by argument" before being allowed to engage in any further enquiry. "Dryden it seems, had read Des Cartes;"[3]

1. _Intellectual Powers_, I, Ch.II, p.232.
2. _Philosophical Essays_, Pt. I, Ch.I, p.58.
3. "What am I? or from whence? - For that I am
   I know, because I think." (_The State of Innocence_ Act. 4.SceneI.)

but Milton had studied nature."[I.]

Stewart is inclined to think that Descartes was not so much concerned to prove his own existence as if there was some doubt about it, as to state the truth which Stewart has been stating, that the self is not an object of consciousness but is plainly declared by all the objects of consciousness.

Every man whose mind is not unhinged is convinced of his identity as far back as he can remember. What is he convinced of when he is convinced of his identity through this time? He is convinced that the self to which his present experiences belong was the self to which all his past experiences belonged. They have come and gone; it has remained through them all with an unbroken existence as one single, identical thing. We cannot define the notion of identity and do not need to. We may say, if we wish, that identity is a relation between a thing at one time and a thing at another time, but we do not have the words to express the difference betwee between this relation and its contraries, although we are in no danger of confusing it with any of its contraries. Diversity is a contrary relation, and similitude and dissimilitude are two more contrary relations which everyone easily distinguishes from identity and diversity.. Identity implies an "unterrupted continuance of exi existence. That which hath ceased to exist, cannot be the same with that which afterwards begins to exist; for this would be to suppose a being to exist after it ceased to exist, and to have had existence before it was produced."[2.]

The self is obviously indivisible; "a part of a person is a manifest absurdity". People do of course (or did) speak of parts of their person, and there are contexts in which 'a part of onesself' would find a natural place. Reid leaves these familiar expressions quite unnoticed, a neglect which he would no doubt have justified on the grounds that 'person' or 'self' in such expressions are used with a figurative extension of their proper meaning. It would not have occurred to Reid to wonder

I. Immutable Truth, Pt. I, ChII, Sec.III, p.77.

2. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.IV, p.344.

whether the meaning with which he used the words is at all their common meaning. And perhaps it is not to be expected that something so much taken for granted as the self, always there and always the same, should have thrust itself into linguistic prominence.

My personal identity then is "the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself. Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers. My thoughts, and actions, and feelings, change every moment - they have no continued, but a successive existence; but that self or I, to which they belong, is permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions, and feelings, which I call mine."[1]

What evidence do I have for the fact of my personal identity through time? I have the unimpeachable evidence of memory. I shall not be asked by anyone who knows what he is asking, to prove that memory is not always fallacious. It would have to be always fallacious for its testimony to our personal identity to be mistaken; "everything that a man remembers convinces him that he existed at the time remembered". The testimony of memory cannot be split into halves, into a reliable half that things happened and into an unreliable half that I was concerned in them. I remember what happened and with the same assurance my part in it. Something I did; "my memory testifies not only that this was done, but that it was done by me who now remember it", Reid says (forgetting that each faculty is to have its proper work ascribed to it, and that memory is intruding upon the present). "If it was done by me, I must have existed at that time, and continued to exist from that time to the present."[2]

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1. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.IV, p.345.
2. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.IV, p.345.

It is especially Stewart's opinion that the beliefs of common sense are conditions of thought and intelligent action, their presuppositions, the vincula of their coherence. Stewart leaves hisopinion almost unargued. Reid has an argument to show that our belief in our personal identity has the status which Stewart later claimed collectively for the beliefs of common sense.

"We may observe, first of all, that this conviction is indispensably necessary to all exercise of reason. The operations of reason, whether in action or in speculation, are made up of successive parts. The antecedent are the foundation of the consequent, and, without the conviction that the antecedent have been seen or done by me, I could have no reason to proceed to the consequent in any speculation, or in any active project whatever."[I.]

The evidence which people have of other people's self-identity, and therefore of their own farther back than they can remember, is of a completely different kind from the evidence they have of their own identity as far back as they can remember. The evidence for other people's identity is the evidence of similarity. The man I met today looks like the man I met a year ago, behaves in every way as he did; I have no doubt that he is the man I met a year ago. Whenever we find great similarity we presume identity unless there is some reason not to. Since the indirect evidence for identity is a matter of similarity, and similarity is a matter of degree, it is evidence which varies from what will justify certainty, to a justification for no more than the barest presumption.

One supposes that Reid saw that his account of the transition from phenomenal similarity to metaphysical identity is very elliptical; he does not give any indication. Nor any indication whether he would allow that the everyday expressions for personal identity change their primary meaning to something less occult when we use them not of ourselves but of others. No metaphysical thoughts cross

I. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.IV, p.344.

as someone
our minds when we recognize someone we have met before. It is perhaps that we stop at the signs whose significance we would always go on to realize, but in the ordinary business of life have no occasion to. Reid does not say.

Personal identity is a 'perfect identity'; that is there are no degrees of it. The identity of material things is imperfect; they are made up of parts which the are always losing and replacing with other parts, or simply losing. If the change is gradual enough it might even become total, and the thing still be considered th same thing as long as it keeps the same name. 'Identity' is a word with this ambiguity, that it is vague when applied to things and precise when applied to persons. The changes which "common language" makes consistent with the identity of things differ in number and degree, not in kind from those which destroy it. Questions, therefore, as to whether a thing is the same thing at difierent times are verbal questions. They have either no right answers or the usual answers are the right answers.[I.]

To make personal identity consist in "consciousness alone", as Locke does, is to confuse the evidence that a man has for his identity with his identity. This is very paradoxical and has very paradoxical consequences. It follows that none of us were ever born; that "a man may be, and at the same time not be , the person that did a particular action.

"Suppose a brave officer to have been flogged when a boy at school, for robbing an orchard, to have taken a standard from the enemy in the first campaign, and to have been made a general in advanced life: Suppose also, which must be admitted to be possible, that, when he took the standard, he was conscious of his having been flogged at school, and that when made a general he was conscious of his taking the standard, but had absolutely lost consciousness of his flogging.

"These things being supposed. it follows, from Mr Locke's doctrine, that he

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I. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.IV, p.346.

who was flogged at school is the same person who took the standard, and that he who took the standard is the same person who was made a general. Whence it follows, if there be any truth in logic, that the general is the same person with him who was flogged at school. But the general's consciousness does not reach so far back as his flogging - therefore, according to Mr Locke's doctrine, he is not the person who was flogged. Therefore, the general is, and at the same time is not the same person with him who was flogged at school."[1]

The self, the mind, is that which thinks and feels and desires and wills. But when you ask, not what it does, but what it is, there is no answer. You are not satisfied with the information that matter is extended, solid, divisible; you knew it had these properties and now want to know the nature of the "thing itself". There is again no answer. We do know what some things are "in themselves". Our notions of these can be called 'direct'."Of other things, we know not what they are in themselves, but only that they have certain properties or attributes, or certain relations to other things: of these our conception is only relative.[2] If a thing is distinguished from other things by any extraneous circumstance, by its place for example, as a book might be by its location on a book-shelf, we have a merely relative conception of it. The secondary qualities of bodies are unknown causes of known effects; we have relative notions of the secondary qualities of bodies. We have direct notions of their primary qualities and it is part of the work of natural philosophy to convert our relative notions of secondary qualities into direct notions.

We have also relative notions of another kind, notions which are derived not from the accidental circumstances of things, but from their"essential attributes" notions which cannot be turned into direct notions. One term only of a relation is presented and its correlative and the relation read off intuitively from it.

1. Intellectual Powers, III, Ch.VI, p.351.
2. Active Powers, I,, Ch.I, p. 513.

These are our notions of matter and mind as substantial things.

What is it that is left in obscurity if the "essential attributes" of matter and mind are disclosed? Presumably attributes which are still more essential, the ground of those which make the essential difference between matter and mind in our experience of them. For if the substances were featureless in themselves, or if their features were simply their observable features, there would be nothing absent in the relative concept which would be present in the direct concept which we might have had if God had given us different intellectual powers.

A relative knowledge of matter and mind is an absolute ignorance of their essential nature, and any words which do not sharply remind us of our ignorance have to be avoided. The words 'spiritual being' are not agnostic enough for Stewart. It is, he remarks, unfortunate that the two very important negative truths, whose recognition we owe especially to Descartes, should have been obscured (one of them by Descartes' commentation, the other by Descartes himself) under misleadingly positive language. How much futile controversy might have been stifled if the simple facts had been simply stated: the mind is immaterial, and some of our concepts are not derived from sensation. Instead we have the mysteries of the mind's 'spirituality' and of 'innate ideas'.[I.]

If we are absolutely ignorant of the essential nature of matter and mind, how do we know that they are essentially different? The question is too obvious to have escaped Reid's notice and since he has not answered it and speaks with untroubled conviction of two substances, he must have thought the traditional answer satisfactory: The opposite properties of matter and mind could not inhere in a single substance. The activity of the mind and the inertia of matter, the indivisibility of the mind, the divisibility of matter; Reid heavily emphasizes

I. Dissertation, pp. II7, I48.

these contrasted features of matter and mind, and he may have considered that there was no longer any meaning in the words 'belonging to a subject' if these are supposed to be properties which could belong to the same subject.[1]

Stewart is less consistently sure than Reid that the difference between matter and mind goes beyond their phenomenal difference, and not very interested in whether it does so or not. No important human concerns are affected either way, and certainly not the question of our immortality. We have better assurances of our immortality than from the soul's simplicity; we have "the moral judgments and moral feelings of the human heart". "The proper use of the argument concerning the immateriality of mind, is not to establish any positive conclusion as to its destiny hereafter; but to repel the reasonings alleged by materialists, as proofs that its annihilation must be the obvious and necessary effect of the dissolution of the body."[2]

But the science of the mind depends upon the recognition that the phenomenal difference between matter and mind is absolute, that they are two entirely separate worlds for investigation, that nothing found in one of them can be applied to the solution of any problems in the other. The science of the mind is the examination of the facts of consciousness, their reduction to general laws and the deduction of the consequences of these laws. The metaphysical materialistsare comparatively harmless, because metaphysical; the psychological materialistshave a programme which will end the science of the mind. Stewart is usually a mild critic, but he is always fierce against Hartley and the philosophers who have shared his views. "Many absurd theories have, indeed, at different times been produced by our countrymen; but I know of no part of Europe where such systems as those of Hartley and Bonnet have been so uniformly treated with the contemptthey deserve as in Scotland."[3]

1. Cp. Elements, Vol.I, Introduction, p.47 with Dissertation, pp.66-67, p.II4.
2. Dissertation, pp.II5-II6.
3. Dissertation, p.435.

Reid of course agrees with Stewart that the philosophy of the mind is to be built upon a pure phenomenology of the mind, but the metaphysical interests of common sense have also to be watched, and common sense is implicitly dualist root and branch. Bodies and minds are altogether different kinds of things, not things that might merge into identity below their manifested properties, though common sense has had to wait on philosophy (on Descartes in particular, Reid thinks) to know how to put the difference properly. In the ancient world philosophers and the vulgar alike had no better concepts for the purpose than a distinction between 'gross' and 'subtle' matter. It is not surprising that the tendency "to materialize the mind and its contents" should have had so long a history. The language for the description of the mind has been borrowed from the language for the description of material things, the earliest objects of everyone's attention and the strongest for most men all their lives.

Every man knows, however inarticulately, that his being is indivisible and that he is capable of originating action. He has therefore, the premisses for the deduction of the soul's immateriality, since material being is essentially divisible and essentially passive. The essential passivity of matter, the fact it acts only as it is acted upon, is not an intuitive deliverance of common sense. It is a fact established by experience and so thoroughly that it is now " a fundamental principle of natural philosophy". In the infancy of the race, men not knowing what caused the behaviour of material things but knowing that something must, read into them an activity like the activity they found in themselves. The relics of this notion are to be found in all languages. Thus the analogies between matter and mind have not always been drawn in one direction. Their expulsion was a necessity for natural philosophy and is for the philosophy of the mind.

I.

I. Aberdeen MSS., 2131.6.

It is the universal conviction of men, Beattie says, that we have souls which are completely different things from our bodies. No arguments are needed in support of this conviction; no arguments can shift it. This conviction has intuitive evidence; it has "the evidence of internal sense". Whatever any man may say, he shows in his conversation and behaviour "by plain signs" that he makes an absolute distinction between his body and his soul. Beattie has heard of only one man whose professed belief that he had no soul was uncontradicted by his behaviour. He was a clergyman of a generation back and he became certain that God had for some reason removed his soul and left him a mere animal. Every one will agree that this melancholy delusion was due to madness, to a "depravation of the intellect" as real as if a person had come to believe that he was without a body.[1]

Without personal identity, no moral responsibility. And no philosopher is to be found disputing it. This is frustrating because the Common Sense philosppher did not intend the statement as an eirenical statement. They are quite sure that ordinary men, and the philosophers who have resolved personal identity into a serial identity, do not mean the same thing by the 'same person'. The personal identity implied by moral responsibility is the identity of the same individual being through time. There could still be the deceptive agreement. If one is to be driven into technicalities which will have to be laboriously explained to the plain man whose convictions are being defended, if his convictions cannot be stated in his own language because philosophers have made it ambiguous, then the identity presupposed is the identity of 'substance'.

When Hume explains in turn in his own vocabulary what personal identity is, he says it is "that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness".[2] Reid and Hume are now able to

1. Immutable Truth, Pt.I, Ch.II, Sec.II, pp.79-81.
2. Treatise, Bk.II, Pt.I, Sec.II, P.277.

disagree on the presupposition of moral responsibility. The personal identity which consists in the unity of a series is inadequate for it, Reid is saying. A series is not the sort of thing that can do things and be held responsible for them; none of the capacities of persons are capacities of series. Only the individual members of a series are ever actual. Therefore if our personal identity is to be resolved into a serial identity, and something real is to be responsible for what something real has done, future members of the series will be made responsible for the actions of past members; that is for what they themselves have not done and could not have prevented. "If one set of ideas makes a covenant, another breaks it, and a third is punished for it, there is reason to think that justice is no natural virtue in this system."[1.]

Our moral responsibility for an action is not more evident than the personal identity which it implies, nor more evident than the freedom of the will which it also implies. While the truths of common sense do not form a system of truths connected by mutual implications, there are some necessary connections between some of them. Moral responsibility presupposes personal identity and free will; free will a self which cannot be resolved into its actions and passions, and which is immaterial in nature.

2. Free Will

We shall find, unless Hume is greatly mistaken, that "all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense, which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words."[2.]

It is taken for granted by everyone that "the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature". (p.88.) Do we need reminders? A prisoner on

1. Inquiry, Ch.I , Sec.VI, p.109.
2. Enquiry, Sec.VIII, Pt.I, p.81.

the way to the scaffold knows he will die from the inflexibility of his guards as inevitably as from the edge of the axe. A man who has left a purse full of gold on the pavement at Charing Cross would as little expect to find it untouched on his return as to have seen it fly off like a feather. Human life depends as much upon the uniformity of human behaviour as upon the uniformity of nature. Nothing of what is ordinarily said of the inconsistency and unreliability of men contradicts, or is thought to contradict, the uniform dependence of their actions upon their motives. We allow for our ignorance of character or circumstances.

Everyone who acknowledges this uniformity in men's behaviour, and everyone does "in common life", acknowledges a necessity in human actions. Anyone who denies a necessity in human actions is stumbling over the word 'necessity'. He thinks of necessity as constraint or compulsion, and he knows that many of his actions are free from constraint or compulsion. In the Treatise Hume had mentioned that 'liberty' in the "most common sense" of the word means no constraint or compulsion, without mentioning that in the most common sense of the words 'liberty' and 'necessity' are opposites. He had even spoken of the "bonds of necessity" from which we can never free ourselves.[1] In the Enquiry the bonds of necessity are not heard of, and the word 'necessity' itself might have disappeared with advantage. It disappearance would manoeuvre the indeterminist nearer to unintelligible speech, and its presence brings with it the clanking of chains. Necessity is no more than "the constant conjunction of like objects"; or from another point of view, it is the inference from one to the other, founded upon their constant conjunction.(p.97.)

The belief in liberty is as universal as the belief in necessity. No one denies that we have "a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will" (p.95.); that there are many things which we can do, if we

1. Bk.II, Pt.III, Sec II, P.407, 408.

chose to. And obviously there is no contradiction between necessity, as Hume has defined it, and liberty as Hume has defined it.

It is a verbal embarrassment to Hume to be at once reconciling 'liberty' and 'necessity' and attacking the 'doctrine of liberty'. To avoid it we shall where it is likely to arise use the names 'determinism' and 'indeterminism' for the opposed doctrines and keep th. word 'free will' as far as possible n neutral between them.

In the Treatise more strongly than in the Enquiry, but in the Enquiry also, Hume gives the impression that he thought that the belief in the indeterminacy of the will is a very general belief, a widespread illusion. There is not simply a universal belief in determinism and a universal belief in the free will which is consistent with it. "Few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the liberty of spontaneity, as it is call'd in the schools, and the liberty of indifference; betwixt that which is oppos'd to violence, and that which means a negation of necessity and causes."[I.] Necessity may be denied in words by people who have misunderstood the word 'necessity', and indeterminism is asserted against necessity by people who have not thought out the meaning of indeterminism. There is then a universal belief in determinism and in a freedom of the will compatible with it, and a very general belief in a freedom of the will incompatible with it. (And since people have imagined that they could actually experience the indeterminacy of choice, some factual argument, as well as "a few intelligible definitions" is needed to end the controversy over free will.)

The doctrine of indeterminism, in Hume's opinion, either means nothing, or something absurd. As the negation of necessity and causes, the doctrine is intelligible and absurd. For what is this negation but the assertion that all human actions are random and chance occurrences? It is unintelligible, has no

I. Treatise, Bk.II, Pt.III, Sec.II, p.407.

meaning at all, when it is construed as an attempt to combine the negation of necessity with the assertion of causes, since 'necessity' is an essential part of what we mean by 'cause'. Some philosophers try to make a distinction between causes which are necessary and others which are not. Hume will allow the distinction when he sees 'cause' defined with the idea of necessary connection left out, and the origin of the idea expressed by the definition clearly indicated. He is sure that he will never see it. We would have no notion of cause and effect if we had had no experience of the constant conjunction of objects; we have no other notion of cause and effect than the notion of this conjunction with the inference founded upon it. "And this constancy forms the very essence of necessity, nor have we any other idea of it." A definition of 'cause' omitting these circumstances will either be unintelligible, or the terms in it will be synonymous with the term to be defined.[I.]

Moral responsibility presupposes free will. It presupposes the free will which is compatible with determinism, and it is incompatible with a free will incompatible with determinism. "Actions are, by their very nature, temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some cause in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour, if good; nor infamy if evil. The actions themselves may be blameable; they may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: But the person is not answerable for them; and as they proceeded from nothing in him that is durable and constant, and leave nothing of that nature behind them, it is impossible he can, upon their account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character

I. Enquiry, Sec.VIII, Pt.I, pp.95-96.

anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it." (p.98)

The belief in liberty and the belief in necessity, Hume might have said, are beliefs of common sense, if anything is. Both are universal (though as a universal belief the belief in necessity does not go under that name); and if either is denied in theory, it is affirmed in practice. And both are implied by the common sense belief in moral responsibility. The work that the common sense philosopher has to do on these beliefs is the work that Hume has been doing: clarifying them, showing their mutual consistency, prising off a third and false belief which has fastened on to the first. Hume might have said this also.

One would have expected that when Reid came to deal with the questions of liberty and necessity, he would have dealt with Hume, and either have accepted his work in principle, or have set about exposing it as more dangerous to common sense than an open attack upon common sense. Reid hardly mentions Hume. Priestley seems to have displaced Hume to some extent in Reid's attention as Reid grew older - not the Priestley of the Examination, but Priestley the materialist and necessitarian - and there is some manuscript indication that the essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents was not put into its final form until most of the rest of the Active Powers had been written. It is Priestley who figures in the discussion, Priestley and Leibniz, and Reid's argument has to be deflected from them on to Hume, if we want his answer to Hume.

"If it cannot be proved that we always act from necessity, there is no need of arguments on the other side to convince us that we are free agents."[I.] The common sense philosopher is concerned with arguments against our free agency, and first with its apparent assertion and real denial.

A power of acting according to the determinations of the will. What more

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I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VI, p.620.

does anyone want in the way of free will than to be able to do a thing if one chooses? To be able to choose to do it or choose not to do it. Besides the power to act as we will. we require "a power over the determinations of the will itself".[I.] We have, in Reid's opinion, half the free will we think we have, if we have no more of it than Hume allows us, We are able to do many things if we choose, but have no liberty of choice. Or has Hume been misunderstood? He does say that the liberty of the will is a 'hypothetical' liberty and this seems to imply that "We could sometimes have done something we did not do" needs the expansion of "if we had chosen", in order to bring out the meaning in which it is a true statement (and verifiably true). And this leaves unanswered, might even seem to rule out the question, "Could we ever have chosen to do anything which we did not do?"

In maintaining the liberty which is opposed to 'violence', Hume would certainly maintain that he had provided for our being able to choose, and had not left us with merely executive powers. There are obvious things that he might have said: Whenever we declare that we could not have chosen to do otherwise, we are prepared to state what it was that prevented us; Threats or physical compulsion; we acted in the grip of an ungovernable passion; before we had time to think. Circumstances such as these take away our power of choice, and Hume of course denies with plain common sense that we always find ourselves in circumstances such as these.

The scheme of necessity, Reid is convinced, cannot allow us a power over the determinations of the will. A power of acting as we choose, but not the power of choice, if the choice is between genuinely open alternatives. And necessitarian philosophers have very generally argued that there is a logical absurdity in speaking of a power over the determinations of the will.

I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.I, p.599.

"Liberty, they say, consists only in a power to act as we will; and it is impossible to conceive in any being a greater liberty than this. Hence it follows that liberty does not extend to the determinations of the will, but only to the actions consequent to its determination, and depending upon the will. To say that we have power to will such an action, is to say, that we may will it, if we will. This supposes the will to be determined by a prior will; and, for the same reason, that will must be determined by a will prior to it, and so on in an infinite series of wills, which is absurd. To act freely, therefore, can mean nothing more than to act voluntarily; and this is all the liberty that can be conceived in man, or in any being."[I.]

This argument, Reid says, does not touch his definition of liberty, since it is an argument grounded upon a definition "totally different". His definition is "a power over the determinations of the will itself".

There must be more to Reid's answer than shows on the surface. It is perhaps this, that the argument is improperly assimilating 'to be able to do a thing' and 'to be able to choose to do it'. To be able to do a thing is to be able to do it, if one chooses. The necessitarian philosopher is demanding a similar expansion for the other phrase and then pointing to the absurdity in speaking of a power over the determinations of the will. Reid's answer is then a denial that 'a power over the determinations of the will' conceals any hypothetical.

The necessitarian philosopher has not yet finished with Reid's definition. He now appeals to ordinary language against it. When we say that we have power over something we mean that it is under the control of our will, so that it is meaningless to say that we have power over the determinations of our will.

The significance of our ordinary way of speaking has been misunderstood.

"In common life, when men speak of what is, or is not, in a man's power, they

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I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.I, p.601.

attend only to the external and visible effects, which only can be perceived, and which only can affect them. Of these, it is true that nothing is in a man's power but what depends upno his will, and this is all that is meant by this common saying.

"But this is so far from excluding his will from being in his power, that it necessarily implies it. For to say that what depends upon the will is in a man's power, but the will is not in his power, is to say that the end is in his power, but the means necessary to that end are not in his power, which is a [illegible] contradiction."[1]

To have free will, to be a free agent, is to have power over the determinations of the will (and, but this is not in dispute, to have power to act as we will). The doctrine of necessity is the doctrine that the determination of the will is "the necessary consequence of the constitution of the person, and the circumstances in which he is placed".[2] It is a consequence of the possession of free will that a man's actions might have been different, the constitution of his person being what it was and his circumstances what they were. Might have been different and yet, Reid maintains,were not random occurrences, were the actions of an agent, actions which have had a cause as every event must. We have now to see Reid with the problem on his hands of combining the denial of necessity with the assertion of causes.

Reid will allow no exceptions to the principle of causation. "Neither existence, nor any mode of existence, can begin without an efficient cause."[3] This is a necessary truth and a principle of common sense, and like every principle of common sense it governs the conduct of every man whether he acknowledges it or not. "And", Reid says in a bad moment, "if it were possible for any man to root out this principle from his mind, he must give up everything

1. Active Powers, IV, Ch.I p.602.
2. Active Powers, IV, Ch.I, p.602.
3. Active Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.603.

that is called common prudence, and be fit only to be confined as insane."[I.] An efficient cause is a cause which produces its effect, makes it happen, brings it into existence. By an 'efficient cause' Reid means more than these synonyms indicate, but they sufficiently mark the distinction he is initially making between an efficient cause and a cause which is no more than a constant antecedent. By a 'cause' we primarily mean, Reid never doubts, an efficient cause. There is also a cluster of secondary meanings to the word. In the most important of these, the constant antecedents of phenomena are called 'causes'. Natural philosophy is concerned with causes in this sense, and we are concerned with causes in this sense, Reid would have admitted on reflection, when we regulate our lives with common prudence.

How did we come to have the notion of an efficient cause? We are ourselves the efficient causes of our voluntary actions. Without the knowledge of our own agency we should, in all probability, have been without the notion of an efficien cause, and consequently, ignorant of the necessary truth in which this notion figures. We certainly have no notion of an active power which is not analogous to the power which we find in ourselves; that is a power which is exerted by "will and understanding". The Divine agency is something that we can understand up to a point; material agency defeats our comprehension.

Why does Reid find the notion of material agency so peculiarly baffling? He has very nearly defined agency in such a way that only persons can be agents. Active power is the power to <u>originate</u> change, the power to act without being acted upon; a power therefore which therefore belongs to will, and, as far as we can see, to nothing else. Matter acts only as it is acted upon; its nature excludes spontaneity.

".... <u>everything which undergoes any change, must either be the efficient</u>

I. <u>Active Powers</u>, IV, Ch.II, p.603.

cause of that change in itself, or it must be changed by some other being.

"In the first case, it is said to have active power, and to act in producing that change. In the second case, it is merely passive, or is acted upon, and the activ. power is in that being only which produces the change."[1]

"Power to produce any effect, implies power not to produce it. We can conceive no way in which power may be determined to one of these rather than the other, in a being that has no will."[2]

The power in virtue of which an efficient cause produces its effect is "active power". How then could any material thing possibly be an efficient cause Reid listens uncomprehendingly to the assertion of the possibility. If there is any meaning in the words he hears, it is "essentially different" from the meaning he has for the words 'power' and 'efficiency'.[3]

Does Reid think that matter can do anything at all, act even with a derivativ agency? Standard commentary[4] on Reid represents him as considering it highly doubtful, as holding that causal transactions between material things are the occasions for the actions of real agents, that there are no occult depths in a physical cause in virtue of which it is more than a constant antecedent. It may be so. Nature displays numberless effects, Reid says, but the agent is always behind the scenes. The agent he suggests is God Himself or some being to which God has delegated agency.[5] But the main evidence for this interpretation of Reid is constituted by his repeated denials that matter could be capable of agency, of efficient causality. And as the meaning which he puts upon these words is essentially different from the meaning they have for anyone else, there is nothing in these denialsto justify the opinion that Reid held matter to be so inert as to

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1. Active Powers, IV, Ch.II, p.603.
2. Active Powers, I, Ch. V, p.523.
3. Active Powers, I, Ch.VI, p.525.
4. Cousin, Philosophie Écossaise, Lec.XXIII, p.550 ff.; McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy, p.225.
5. Active Powers, I, Ch.V, p.522.

be incapable of action, incapable of producing effects, even when it is acted upon.

To say that we derive our notion of efficient cause from our activity as efficient causes is, Reid recognizes, to say very little. Agency is not introspectible. If all our ideas have to be ideas of sensation or of reflection, we do not have the idea of efficient cause. We do have the idea of it. Some of our ideas are not ideas either of sensation or of reflection. Everyone who knows the language knows that the word 'cause' has a meaning, and a primary meaning, which is not given by the addition together of the ideas of priority, contiguity and constant conjunction. The power in virtue of which an agent can be an agent is no more an object of consciousness than it is of touch or sight. But we have the idea of powerthough the idea is matched by no 'impression'. If we had no idea of power, if the word 'power' was a word without any meaning, we could not distinguish between sense and nonsense in a discussion of the nature of power.[1.]

The freedom of the will is a necessary consequence of the fact that we are the causes of our own actions. To be an agent is to be free to choose how one shall act and to able to act as one chooses.[2.] Let us keep our attention fixed on the meaning of 'cause' and the meaning of 'agent', and we shall "immediately perceive a contradiction in the terms necessary cause and necessary agent". And to say that man is "a free agent, is no more than to say that, in some instances he is truly an agent and a cause, and is not merely acted upon as a passive instrument".[3.] Neither existence nor any mode of existence can begin without an efficient cause, and its efficient cause is a being actualizing the power of self-determining choice.

I. Active Powers, I, Ch.I, p.514.

2. Philosophers may "dispute innocently, whether we be the proper efficient causes of the voluntary motions of our own body: or whether we be only, as Malebranche thinks, the occasional causes". The man who knows that an event "depends upon his will, and who deliberately wills to produce it, is, in the strictest moral sense the cause of the event; and it is justly imputed to him", whatever else may have concurred in its production. (Active Powers,I, ChVIII, p.52

3. Active Powers, IV, Ch,III, p.607.

Can anything be salvaged from the conclusion which Reid has made inevitable by the meanings he has put into his words? The question-begging meaning of 'self determining agent' would have to come out of the meaning of 'efficient cause' and the word left to mean efficient cause. The making of a choice is an occurrence, and like every other occurrence must have a cause. What is its cause? Reid can still give the answer he wanted to give: A "free action is an effect produced by a being who had power and will to produce it; therefore it is not an effect without a cause."[1] If it is not part of the meaning of 'cause' that a cause is a self-determining agent, it is equally not part of its meaning that a cause is a necessary agent. A cause is a cause.

Reid acknowledges that if a cause is nothing but "such previous circumstances as are constantly followed by a certain effect"[2], then an act of free choice is an event without a cause. But this is not what is meant by 'cause' in the principle that everything that happens must have a cause. There could be an exception to the principle, if the cause required was a cause in the sense of the definition which Priestley is repeating from Hume. It would follow from this definition "that whatever was singular in its nature, or the first thing of its kind, could have no cause."[3] (And the antecedent circumstances are as nothing to the origin of a thing if their connection with the thing is merely antecedence.) If a thing cannot begin to exist without a cause, it is an efficient cause on which its existence depends,a cause which brings it into existence.

Reid also acknowledges, he says, that to,establish the doctrine of necessity it is sufficient that "throughout all nature, the same consequences should invariably result from the same circumstances".[4]

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1. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IX, p.626.
2. Priestley, The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, (ed. 1777) p.II. Priestley goes back on Hume by adding "the constancy of the result making us conclude that there must be a sufficient reason, in the nature of things, why it should be produced in those circumstances".
3. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IX, p.627.
4. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IX, p.626.

How is our free will in any way affected by the fact that, as a matter of fact, the same consequences invariably follow upon the same antecedents? I do not in any way have to do the thing that I do because I always would do that thing in those circumstances. And a philosopher who held a determinist theory of the kind which Hume held might continue: With causal necessity dissolved, into this mere matter of fact - "constancy forms the very essence of necessity, nor have we any other idea of it" - all the fatality has gone out of it. "'Twas utterly impossible for us to have acted otherwise" [I.] means no more than that all our actions have been predictable in principle. The indeterminist contradiction of the determinist statement means no more than that some of our actions have been unpredictable in principle. And unpredictability in principle is no foundation for moral responsibility. It is its dissolution. If indeterminism is true, a man's actions are events which merely happen to happen. He is not the author of them; they proceed from nothing in him that is "constant and durable"; however bad they are, he is always innocent.

Reid gives no reasons for his opinion that the doctrine of necessity is admitted when it is admitted that the same antecedents have invariably as a matter of fact the same consequents. And we shall come later on to his argument that the uniformity which we do find in human behaviour is consistent with our having a power over the determinations of our wills and is indeeed what is to be expected from our having this power. We shall also defer the question whether a sense consistent with moral responsibility can be found for "It is possible for us sometimes to have acted otherwise" when, as a necessitarian proposition, "It is impossible for us ever to have acted otherwise" has become "All our actions have been predictable in principle". At the moment our concern is with whether indeterminism leaves human actions without agents. We have Reid's answer and implied in

I. Treatise, Bk.II, Pt.III, Sec.II, p.407.

it, Hume's criticism of an indeterminist theory turned against Hume's theory of our agency.

It is on Hume's view of causation that no man is ever really the author of his actions. One thing happens and then another thing happens; nothing is ever made to happen, brought into existence. There are invariable patterns of antecedent and consequent, but between antecedent and consequent there is no other connection than sequence. They are entirely loose and separate in themselves. But a man's actions are not his actions unless he really brings them into existence and not his actions unless he brings them into existence without having to do so. And a man's free actions do proceed from the most constant and durable thing in him, from his personal being which is responsible for all that he does, because it is the self-determining agent in all that he does.. If of course the self is resolved into a series of associated perceptions, it would be absurd to suppose that it could be a free agent; absurd to suppose it capable of any sort of agency.

The opinion that our actions are determined by our motives involves, in Reid's opinion, a similar absurdity. Motives are turned into causes or agents acting upon the person whose motives they are, when in fact they are "neither causes nor agents. They suppose an efficient cause, and can do nothing without it. We cannot, without absurdity, suppose a motive either to act, or be acted upon; it is equally incapable of action and of passion; because it is not a thing that exists, but a thing that is conceived; it is what the schoolmen called an ens rationis. Motives, therefore, may influence to action, but they do not act. They may be compared to advice, or exhortation, which leaves a man still at liberty. For in vain is advice given when there is not a power either to do or to forbear what it recommends. In like manner, motives suppose liberty in the agent, otherwise they have no influence at all."[I.]

I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IV, p.608.

We do ask "What caused him to act in that way", and might ask this question asking for his motives, and Reid is not saying that there would then be any impropriety in the wording of the question. The word 'cause' is a very ambiguous word;[I.] many secondary meanings have grown out of its primary meaning. There is a definition of 'cause' which covers all its meanings: "Causa est id, quo posito ponitur Effectus, quo sublato tollitur. This, you will easily see, includ many relations, and, I believe, includes all that in any language are expressed by cause, though in some languages some of the relations included under the definition may not be called causes, on account, perhaps, of their having some other word appropriated to signify such relations."[2.] Since a motive is called a cause in this highly general sense, we are encouraged to think that it is a cause in the sense in which it is not and could not be.

Once motives are regarded as efficient causes, as forces, analogy suggests the law of their operation. "Every action, or change of action, in an intelligent being, is proportional to the force of motives impressed, and in the directio of that force."[3.]

Even supposing it true that we never act without a motive, necessitarian theory has misconstrued what it is to act with a motive: the theory represents it as being acted upon by a motive. It is, however, not even true that we never act without a motive. We often do, and act moreover with "forethought and will". Cases frequently occur in which an end of some importance may be reached equally well by any one of a number of different means. A man has no difficulty in takin one of thses rather than another, though the one he selects has no title to preference over the others. And if men cannot act without a motive, what are

I. Aristotle's "distinction of causes into four kinds is not a division of a genus into its species, but of an ambiguous word into its different meanings". "Letter to James Gregory", Reid's Collected Works, p.75.
2."Letter to James Gregory", Reid's Collected Works,p.76.
3. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IV. p.609.

such words as 'wilfullness' and 'caprice' doing in the language? There is admittedly no moral value in a motiveless action, but the fact that we can act without a motive shows that the will can reinforce a weak motive against a strong motive, and this is a fact of great moral consequence.

The characteristic assertion of necessitarian theory is the assertion that where there are contrary motives the strongest prevails. It is put forward as a self-evident truth. How does one, Reid asks, set about testing the relative strengths of motives? Where there are two motives of the same kind it may be easy enough to say which is the stronger. Thus a bribe of a thousand pounds provides a stronger motive than a bribe of a hundred pounds. But when the motives are of different kinds, when, for example duty and interest are opposed, how do we discover which is the stronger? Examining the answer to this question, we see that the proposition that the strongest motive always prevails is either tautologically true or empirically false. Is prevalence to be the test of strenght? Then the proposition is an identical proposition. There is some other test of strength? There is only one other: motives differ in <u>felt</u> strength. This can mean nothing but that the stronger of two contrary motives is the one to which it is easier to yield, against which a severer effort of self-government has to be made if it is to be resisted. And it is not true that people always do what it is easiest to do. I.

Do we ever have to summon up reserves of self-control in order to resist advice or exhortation? Motives may be reasons for an action, as Reid seems to imply, and therefore not psychological forces; may be final causes, as Hamilton remarks in elucidation of Reid, and therefore not efficient causes. But related to a final cause for an action, to a reason for an action, is some impulse to an action, whatever its proper name should be; and as the word 'impulse' indicates;

I. <u>Active Powers</u>, IV, Ch.IV, p.609.

and as the words which describe it indicate ('weak', 'strong', 'irresistible'), it is something analogous to a force. If these impulses are not to be called 'motives', the necessitarian will give them any generic name that Reid pleases, 'desires' and 'aversions' perhaps, maintaining that they are the determinants of human behaviour.

Reid does not dispute their presence; 'impulse' is a wordhe uses himself with its qualifying adjectives. His dispute is with the necessitarian opinion of the relation of the impulses of desire and aversion to the will. Some philosophers use the notion of desire to elide the will by representing desire "as a modification of the will" ("Will as a modification of Desire", Hamilton corrects Reid).[1] To will is one thing, to desire is another, and this distinction is clearly marked in common language. "A man may desire riches, he may desire pleasure, but to will riches or to will pleasure is not English, nor is it sense".[2] What we will "must be an action, and our own action; what we desire may not be our own action; it may be no action at all....we may desire what we do not will, and will what we do not desire."[3] (We may have contrary desires, Stewart adds, drawing still further upon Locke, but not contrary wills.) It does happen, Reid agrees, that desire rising to ungovernable passion over-rides the will and determines a man's actions, and when this happens, he is no longer responsible for the things he does.[4]

"If man be a free agent, and be not governed by motives all his actions must be mere caprice" - Reid is speaking for the determinist philosopher. Reid's main concern is to dispose of the objection that men are ungovernable unless their actions are governed by their motives; rewards and punishments will have no effect upon them. In this context Reid touches incidentally on the matter of the

I. 'Will', Brown says, is desire immediately terminating in action; 'desire', as distinguished from will, is desire without immediate effect.(Observations on Cause and Effect, pp.62-63. The following pages introduce introduce some complication into this simplicity.) 2. "Fragments of the Intellectual Powers, " Aberdeen MSS. 2131.3. 3. Active Powers, II, Ch.I, p.532.

predictability of our behaviour if our wills are free. We shall summarize the argument against indeterminism from the predictability of human behaviour and (after a comment upon it) see how Reid handles it.

If men's actions are not determined by their motives, their actions are random occurrences even though they might have 'efficient' causes. But in fact we can nearly always say why we did (and when we are puzzled, other people can often enlighten us), and the more we know of a man's character the more predictable his behaviour is. These facts are inconsistent with an indeterminist theory and consequences of a determinist theory.

Any action done with a motive allows an answer to the question "Why did you do that?" The answer is the same on a determinist or on an indeterminist theory. It states the motive. What is finally unanswerable on an indeterminist theory is a question asking why preference was given to one rather than another of two conflicting motives. The indeterminist might ask whether the answer which determinism finally requires - "I acted the way I did because I am the person I am" - is very much more illuminating than the silence which indeterminism imposes. He might ask this and receive the reply: Much more illuminating, because otherwise a man's actions in certain circumstances give no indication of his actions in similar circumstances.

In Reid's opinion the facts with regard to the calaulability of human behavio are as we would expect them to be, if men were free agents in the sense in which determinism denies that they are. The facts are that people usually act in character and occasionally out of character. Suppose that men have "moral liberty What use "may they be expected to make of this liberty? It may surely be expected? It may surely be expected, that, of the various actions within the sphere of their power, they will choose what pleases them most for the present,

or what appears to be most for their real, though distant good. When there is a competition between these motives, the foolish will prefer present gratification; the wise the greater and more distant good.

"Now, is not this the very way in which we see men act? Is it not weak reasoning, therefore, to argue, that men have not liberty, because they act in that very way in which they would act if they had liberty?" I.

Reid's problem is to explain how the choices we make can be free in the indeterminist sense and yet substantially predictable. In answer to it he seems to be saying that we choose according to our character, and is not this what the determinist says? There is no reason why the indeterminist should not say it. It is a statement which is neutral as between determinism and indeterminism; 'in accordance with' is not 'following necessarily from'. The sort of choices a man does make could show the choices which he is likely to go on making, though he makes his will, how he is exerting the power which he has over its determinations. Something to this effect Reid must have meant, if he is attempting an answer to the determinist objection and not, in spite of himself, simply speaking as a determinist.

There is a further reason why our behaviour should be largely calculable though our wills are free: Every choice in one direction makes another choice in the same direction easier and therefore more likely. To have free will as we have it does not, in Reid's opinion, imply that any choice we might make is as probable as any other. To have free will is to have a power over the determinations of the will, and we have this power in varying degrees according to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. "In different men the power of self-government is different, and in the same man at different times." It is diminished in proportion to the violence of desires and passion, and diminished in

I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.IV, p.612.

proportion to the strength of habit. (Our power of self-determination in another sense - which Reid does not realize is another sense, because he uses 'power over the determinations of the will' and 'power of self-government' as aynonymous - is increased, Reid mentions, by good habits.)[1]

Stewart's account of free will is a reproduction of Reid's with one apparent and one real deviation. Our free actions, Stewart appears to say, are uncaused, and this is not a violation of the principle of causation. "The argument for Necessity derives all its force from the maxim "that every change requires a cause." But this maxim, although true with respect to inanimate matter, does not apply to intelligent agents, which cannot be conceived without the power of self-determination." The principle of causation is "generally stated in too unqualified a manner: It is "every change in inanimate matter" which requires a cause. The "determinations of voluntary agents" need no causes, because the agent is himself "the author of them; nor could anything have led philosophers to look for any other causes of them, but an apprehended analogy between volition in a mind and motion in a body."[2] As Stewart is simply concerned to make room for free agency, he is presumably not exempting from causation the changes undergone involuntarily by intelligent beings; he was not thinking of these when he said that only changes in inanimate matter have causes. And a few pages later he speaks of free actions as 'effects' of self-determining causes.

To ground the defence of free will in any way upon the proposition that we can act without motives is a mistake, Stewart says. We certainly cannot act as rational beings without motives. "The question is not concerning the influence of motives, but concerning the nature of that influence. The advocates for Necessity represent it as the influence of a cause in producing its effect. The advocates for Liberty acknowledge that the motive is the occasion of acting, or

1. Active Powers, II, Ch.II, p.534.; Ch.VI, pp.619-620.
2. Active Powers, I, Appendix, Sec.II, p.352.

the reason for acting; but contend that it is so far from being the efficient cause of it, that it supposes the efficiency to exist elsewhere, viz., in the mind of the agent. Between these two opinions there is an essential distinction The one represents man merely as a passive instrument. According to the other, he is really an agent, and the sole author of his own actions. He acts, indeed, from motives, but he has the power of choice among different ones. When he acts from a particular motive, it is not because this motive is stronger than others, but because he willed to act in this way. Indeed, it may be questioned if the strength conveys any idea when applied to motives. It is obviously an analogica or metaphorical expression, borrowed from a class of phenomena essentially different."[1]

It is "a dictate of common sense, that we can be under no obligation to do what it is impossible for us to do".[2] We do not blame madmen and idiots for wha they do. They do not know right from wrong, nor if they did, would they be responsible for their actions, since it is not in their power to make them different. There is the same darkness in the understanding of infants and the same incapacity for self-government. It would be unthinkable to blame them for anything. Children have very little power of self-government and therefore we hardly hold them morally responsible. There are ungovernable passions and these cancel moral responsibility as completely as madness. They are madness while they last. If we never in practice allow that even the fiercest passion exculpates a man completely, it is because we are never quite sure that it was irresistible. Passion is always allowed to be some excuse for an action. It excuses because it invades the power of self-determination. There is then "a perfect correspondence between power, on the one hand, and moral obligation and and unaccountableness, on the other .... every limitation of the first produces

1. Active Powers, I, Appendix, p.370.
2. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VI, p.617.

a corresponding limitation of the two last."[1]

Does Reid think that the doctrine of necessity abolishes the distinctions between actions which could not have been avoided (for which there is no responsibility), actions that it would have been very hard to avoid (for which there is diminished responsibility), and actions which could have easily been avoided (for which there is full responsibility)? It seems that he does: Upon the "system of Liberty", he says, these distinctions are "perfectly intelligible"; "but, I think irreconcileable to that of Necessity; for, How can there be an easy and a dificul in actions equally subject to necessity? or, How can power be greater or less, increased or diminished, in those who have no power?"[2]

Reid could no doubt have been pursuaded that a determinist theory does not abolish the empirical distinctions between the three classes of actions. He would still have insisted that the moral distinctions could not be grounded upon the empirical distinctions if these are set in the context of a determinist theory. A determinist theory will provide for the distinction between actions which 'could have and those which 'could not' have been avoided, using these expressions to mark the difference between actions done under no physical or psychological copmul sion and others where there was compulsion. It is not yet a determinist theory in making this provision; it has not yet defined itself against indeterminism. The explanations have been given in order that the determinist assertion will not be misunderstood, the assertion that we could not have done anything that we did not do. Further explanations may be needed, further senses of 'could have ' recognized, in which, consistently with deterministic inevitability, we could have done something that we did not do. They will be given, the further senses recognized, and with the risk of misunderstanding removed, the determinist assertion is repeated. Whatever else Reid may have thought that the necessitarian

1. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VII, p.622.
2. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VI, p.620.

philosopher was committed to, he knew that he was saying that we could not have done anything that we did not do, and he knew what was meant.

In what sense of 'could have' is the indeterminist asserting that we could have done things that we did not do? In the sense in which the necessitarian is denying that we could have done them. This easy answer is not open to the indeterminist when the determinist is asserting that the meaning of 'could have' is exhausted when its empirical senses have been exhausted; and that it is meaningless to say in any further sense (except a purely logical one) that we could ever have done anything which we did not do.

Reid would deny that this further meaning has to be looked for. It is the meaning which our words have when we admit that we could have acted otherwise, because we did not act under compulsion; no one forced the action on us, no ungovernable passion had us powerless.

If we had to do whatever we have done (or if there is no meaning except meanings of a kind consistent with determinism in saying that we did not have to) then the consequences are, in Priewtley's and Reid's opinion, that nothing is ever our fault. Men "cannot accuse themselves of having done anything wrong, in the ultimate sense of the words. In a strict sense, they have nothing to do with repentance, confession, and pardon - these being adapted to a fallacious view of things."[1] A great deliverance, Priestley thinks. He has been reluctant to "give up his liberty" until he had come to see that necessity really sets men free. With a restoration, Reid says taking up Priestley's theme, "to the state of innocence. "It delivers them from all the pangs of guilt and remorse, and from all fear about their future conduct, ... They may be as secure that they shall do nothing wrong as those who have finished their course'."[2]

It will be objected, Reid remarks, that feelings of guilt and remorse and

1. Priestley, The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, p.
2. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VI, p.618.

resolutions of amendment do not imply a belief in the liberty of our will, since those who subscribe to the doctrine of necessity are to be found blaming themselv and others for their actions, repenting and resolving to do better. They are and not surprisingly, Reid agrees; when a common sense belief is given up in speculat ion, it keeps its hold on a man in practice.

The belief in our free agency has a double grip upon us; its own and our realization that without it the presuppositions of morality have gone: No obligation without the possibility of complying with it; no possibility of complying with it unless we can do what we do not do; no merit or demerit for doing what is unavoidable; no rewards or punishments, no just rewards or punish- ments, where there is no merit or demerit. "If we adopt the system of necessity, the terms moral obligation and unaccountableness, praise and blame, merit and demerit, justice and injustice, reward and punishment, wisdom and folly virtue and vice, ought to be disused, or to have new meanings given to them when they are used in religion, in morals, or in civil government; for, upon that system, th there can be no such things as they have been always used to signify."[I.]

That 'ought' implies 'can', is not a proposition which divides philosophers. Their unanimity breaks up when it comes to the elucidation of 'can'. We need not concern ourselves here with any analogical refinements: 'Can' in the indetermini sense, or in one or several of the senses compatible with determinism? This is n a question which is answerable without a decision on the nature of moral obligati If the whole point of moral utterances is, for example, to urge principles of conduct upon others or upon ourselves, if the significance of the words of morali is confined to their function in this activity, then the presupposition of moral utterances on any occasion of their use is the belief that the relevant physical capacity is present and duress of any kind sufficiently absent. There would be

I. Active Powers, IV, Ch.VII, p.622.

no point in construing 'can' indeterministically. But if, as Reid was convinced there is an immutable law, and right actions are those which keep it and wrong actions those which break it (and moral utterances are true when they correspond to its prescriptions, false when they deviate from them), then its prescriptions do seem to imply a free will which is inconsistent with determinism.

CHAPTER VII MORAL DISTINCTIONS

Matter of Fact and Moral Fact.

Nothing is more familiar to us than moral approbation and disapprobation. It is strange then that their nature should have become a matter for dispute. The dispute is one which has arisen among philosophers, but not because they have begun to pay closer attention to the operations of their minds in approbation and disapprobation than had been given previously, and have found an illusory clarity darken into obscurity. The dispute has had another origin. It is the "modern system of Ideas and 'Impressions" which has obliged philosophers to ask with sophisticated ignorance, what approbation and disapprobation are, whether they include 'a real judgment' which 'like other judgments must be true or false' or whether they do no more than express some "agreeable or uneasy feeling".

Before the advent of this system nothing "would have appeared more absurd than to say, that whenI condemn a man for what he has done, I pass no judgment at all about the man, but only express some uneasy feeling in myself". It is a consequence of the new system that this apparent absurdity of speech is the appropriate description of the facts. Not a consequence which was immediately obvious; time was needed to enter into the spirit of the system. Descartes and Locke went so far as to transform the secondary qualities of bodies into "feelings or sensations and to deprive the senses of the office of judgment, making them merely channels through which ideas were conveyed into the mind, Judgment is subsequently possible and immediately on the relation of ideas to ideas. Judgment on the relation of ideas to the external world must be mediated by reasoning, and the premisses allowed will support no conclusions. Locke's principles in Berkeley's hands transformed the primary qualities into sensations and left no external world to be

even the indirect object of judgment. The same principles applied to matters of taste showed that "beauty and deformity are not anything in the objects, ...but certain feelings in the mind of the spectator". The same principles take the judgment out of moral approbation and disapprobation and leave them as the expression of feeling, or if there is a judgment left to them,it is about certain of our feelings. I.

Many operations of the mind which go under a single name are complex and have feeling or sensation as a constituent and judgment or belief as another, and these constituents inseparably related. In some of them the belief is "a consequence of the sensation and regulated by it", as in sense perception. More often the of dependence between the constituents is reversed. Thus no one feels grateful unless he believes that some kindness has been done to him, or frightened unless he thinks there is something to be frightened of. Moral approbation is complex. There is feeling in it, a complex feeling, and judgment, and the feeling is dependent on the judgment, would change to its contrary if the judgment changed to its contrary. The judgment is that the conduct approved of "merits esteem". It is a judgment which cannot be resolved into the expression of a feeling of app approval, or into a judgment that one has a feeling of approval.

I might say of someone that his conduct is "highly approvable", Suppose I say instead that his conduct "gave me a very agreeable feeling". If "approbati be nothing but an agreeable feeling", the first of these statements means no more than the second. There is "no rule in grammar or rhetoric, nor any usage in language, by which these two,speeches can be construed so as to have the same meaning. The first expresses plainly an opinion or judgment of the conduct of the man, but says nothing of the speaker. The second only testifies a fact concerning the speaker - to wit, that he had such a feeling." And again the firs

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I. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, pp.670-671.

can be contradicted without giving affront, but not the second; "for, as every man must know his own feelings, to deny that a man had a feeling which he affirms he had, is to charge him with falsehood."

The first statement, therefore, cannot have the same meaning as the second; can therefore, in Reid's opinion, have no meaning at all, if to approve is no more than to have feelings of an agreeable kind towards the object of approval.

"This doctrine ....That moral approbation is merely a feeling without judgmei necessarily carries along with it this consequence, that a form of speech, upon one of the most common topics of discourse, which either has no meaning, or a meaning irreconcilable to all rules of grammar or rhetoric, is found to be commo and familiar in all languages and in all ages of the world, while every man know how to express the meaning, if it have any, inplain and proper language."

"Such a consequence I think sufficient to sink any philosophical opinion on which it hangs."[1]

Reid's place in the history of moral philosophy is as a critic of subjectivi views of the nature of morality. The subjectivist views had been his own views. He announces his conversion from them in a paper[2] with the title "Whether our Moral Determinations are real Judgments which must be true or false and whose Truth depends not upon the constitution of the Person who judges but upon the Nature of the things which he judges?" "I confess, Reid says, I have not always been of the same mind in this question, having been long pretty much determined one side, after wards dubious and uncertain and for some time past more inclined to the contrary side. I wish however to guard against the zeal of a convert. And as I expect to hear in this meeting the objections against the opinion which I am to propose set in the strongest light, I shall not be ashamed upon convictio to return to my first faith."

1. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, pp.673-674.
2. Aberdeen MSS., 2131.3.

The surprising thing is how late Reid's conversion was. He mentions at the end of the fifth last chapter of the Active Powers that the four last chapters were written in substance "long ago, and read in a literary society". The philosophical society at Aberdeen, one supposed with Hamilton; so that these chapters would have been written in substance before the Inquiry was published. And accordingly one treated the chapter whose contents have just been summarized as a commentary on the statement in the Dedication to the Inquiry that "virtue" was destroyed in the general catastrophe brought on by the theory of ideas, assuming as a matter of course that the objectivity argued for in the Inquiry extended to morality.

The discourse was not read to the philosophical society at Aberdeen as its minute book (Aberdeen MS.,539) shows. It appears to have been given, with a number of others preserved among the Reid manuscripts in the University of Aberdeen, to a literary society in Glasgow shortly after Reid went there.

What then did Reid have in mind in the Inquiry when he spoke of the theory of ideas as carrying implications fatal to morality? The self resolved into a bundl of perceptions, no moral subject, no moral agent. It seems to have been this that Reid was thinking of.

In the discourse Reid has concentrated, with one or two additional details, observations on the nature of the moral judgment which are scattered in the Activ Powers: the moral judgment is a real judgment, a judgment in which the speaker is not the "subject", a judgment involving unique concepts. It is not enough to maintain that the moral judgment is a real judgment, which like other judgments must be true or false, which therefore cannot be resolved into the expression of some feeling. "To have the toothache is not to judge but to feel, but to affirm that one has the toothache is not to feel but to judge. The feeling cannot be

true or false, but the affirmation must be true or false". To affirm that one has feelings of a certain kind from the contemplation of an action is to make a real judgment. It is a judgment in which one is oneself the "subject". It must be true or false, but it will change from truth to falsity with a change in one's feelings. Are our moral determinations judgments of this kind? This question, along with the question whether they are real judgments at all, is to be answered by examining the manner in which our moral determinations are expressed in language. And the manner in which they are expressed in language is a plain declaration of "the common sense of mankind" that they are judgments and are quit unlike judgments of this kind; that they are true or false according to the constitution of the things judged and independently of the constitution of the person judging. They are objective judgments then, and the notions involved in them appear to the most careful reflection to be notions" of a peculiar nature and unlike to anything else".

Moral distinctions are derived from a moral sense, Hume says. Reid agrees that moral distinctions can be said to be derived from a moral sense. He differs from Hume on the nature of a sense and therefore on the nature of the moral sense "Mr. Hume will have the Moral Sense to be only a power of feeling without judging There is this analogy between the senses and the moral sense: "as by them we hav not only the original conceptions of the various qualities of bodies, but the original judgment that this body has such a quality, that such another; so by our moral faculty, we have both the original conceptions of right and wrong in conduc of merit and demerit, and the original judgments that this conduct is right, that is wrong; that this character has worth, that demerit."[2.]

The concept expressed by the word "ought" appears to be for Reid the unifying moral concept. The right and the good are what ought to be done; the wrong and

I. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.674.
2. Active Powers, III, Ch.VI, p.590.

the bad what ought not to be done. A good man is a man who consistently does his duty. If you were to maintain that a better man is a man who does more than his duty you would, so far as Reid's opinion can be ascertained, be maintaining a moral impossibility, but "better" could be paraphrased as "ought to be more admired, more highly esteemed", is "more estimable, more admirable".

The concept of obligation is indefinable but clearly a relational concept. (And "to determine relations is the province of judgment not of feeling".)[1]

"If we examine the abstract notions of Duty, or Moral Obligation, it appears to be neither any real quality of the action considered by itself, nor of the agent considered without respect to the action, but a certain relation between the one and the other.

"When we say a man ought to do such a thing, the ought, which expresses the moral obligation, has a respect, on the one hand, to the person who ought; and, on the other, to the action which he ought to do. Those two correlates are essential to every moral obligation; take away either, and it has no existence. So that, if we seek the place of moral obligation among the categories, it belongs to the category of relation."[2]

If moral judgments are real judgments which like all other judgments must be true or false, what are the facts which make them true or false? Take any action, Hume says, allowed to be vicious; wilful murder for instance. What other facts are there here besides the strangling hands and the intention to kill and the motive behind it? "There is no other matter of fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation,

> which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact .... It lies in yourself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or

1. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.677.
2. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.VI, pp.588-589.

character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of i Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold. which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind."[1.]

There is , in Reid's view, no quality in the action besides its matter of fact qualities. A physical and psychological description would be a complete description of the action. But there is a fact besides the fact that the action was done and with such and such motives and besides the fact that contemplating it we feel a sentiment of disapprobation. It is the fact that what was done ought not to have been done (and ought to be condemned by everybody). And the judgment which states this fact is, Reid maintains, a judgment in the same sense as a judgment which states any matter of fact.

It is difficult to avoid speaking of moral 'qualities', 'properties', 'attributes', using these words quite non-committally. They occur so rarely in Reid as to suggest that their avoidance is deliberate.[2.] Yet Reid does say emphatically that beauty is a quality, is a property of things, and says so in discussing the conclusions which Hume draws from the analogy between beauty and virtue. There is the analogy, Reid agrees: Hume is as mistaken about the natur of beauty as he is about the nature of virtue, has the same paradoxical opinions with regard to both, and with regard to both is opposed by "the common language and common sense of mankind".[3.]

Continuation of footnote 2 from previous page; The "Sentimental philosophers," Reid says, demand a definition of this relation. There is none any more than there is of equality, similitude or contrariety. Other words mig be used instead of 'obligation', but none are "plainer" than this word or "bett understood". (Aberdeen MSS., 2131.3.)

I. Treatise, Bk.III, Pt.I, Sec.I, pp.468-469.

2. Dr. Raphael (The Moral Sense, p.184) draws attention to the break in the symmetry of the language in which Reid speaks of the resemblance between the senses and the moral sense: From the senses "original conceptions of the various qualities of bodies" and original judgments that this body has such a quality;

Reid's discussion of the nature of beauty needs fairly careful attention. If one took account only of certain of its prominent features and neglected other unobtrusive features, one could come to the mistaken conclusion that Reid's disagreement with Hume is merely verbal, and since Reid and Hume agree that there is a close analogy between beauty and virtue, to the further conclusion that their disagreement over the nature of morality is verbal, or that Reid has two inconsistent opinions on the nature of morality.

There is, in Reid's view, a close analogy not only between moral approbation and aesthetic taste, but also between aesthetic taste and physical taste. Aesthetic taste, like the taste of the palate, enjoys some things and dislikes others, finds others indifferent and is sometimes undecided. Things are bitter or sweet whether they are tasted or not; when they are tasted, sensations corresponding to them are produced. Things are beautiful or ugly whether they are seen or not; being seen, they produce in the spectator a correspondent emotion. Taste in bodies is a secondary quality; we know no more about it by tasting than that it is something or other which gives us a certain sensation. We may be as ignorant of what it is that makes an object beautiful, knowing that it is beautiful but unable to say why. On the other hand a person may be able to see how in a work of art, for example, "every part is fitted with exact judgment to its end. Its beauty is then no longer mysterious, but "perfectly comprehended"; he knows "wherein it consists, as well as how it affects him". [I.] The different kinds of tastes are innumerable and nearly all of them, as they have no names of their own are named from the bodies to which they belong. And this is true of the different kinds of beauty also, and they are still more radically heterogeneous . As the

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Continuation of 2 and footnote 3 from previous page from the moral sense, "original conceptions of right and wrong" and "original judgments that this conduct is right, that is wrong".

3. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.677.

I. Intellectual Powers, VIII, p.491.

nature of the secondary qualities of bodies is a matter for philosophical enquiry so philosophers properly concern themselves with the attempt to discover what it is that makes beauty beauty wherever it is found. A mathematical demonstration, the human face, a stroke of wit may all be beautiful. There appears to be "no identity or even similarity" in the beauty of things so diversely beautiful. Then why are they called "beautiful"? If they do not have some common characteristic, they must have some common relation to us or to something else. Not to anything else; there is nothing that could be the centre of this circumference except ourselves.

"All the objects we call beautiful agree in two things, which seem to concur in our sense of beauty. First, when they are perceived or even imagined, they produce a certain agreeable emotion or feeling in the mind; and secondly, This agreeable emotion is accompanied with an opinion or belief of their having some perfection or excellence belonging to them."[I.]

There is the greatest variety in aesthetic emotion, but broadly it is of two kinds; There are the emotions aroused by grandeur or sublimity and the emotion aroused by beauty - if we now use the word "beauty" more narrowly and properly than we have hitherto been doing.

I. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.IV, p.498. Stewart does not disagree with Re though without mentioning Reid, he introduces his discussion of the nature of beauty with a protest against the naivety of the assumption that things must have something in common in order to have the same name. The assumption overlooks the "transitivity" of names. Suppose that "A,B, C, D, E denote a series of objec that A possesses some one quality in common withB; B a quality in common with C; C a quality in common with D; D a quality in common withE; - while, at the same time, no quality can be found which belongs in common to any three objects in the series. Is it not conceivable, that the affinity between A and B may produce a transference of the name of the first to the second; and that, in consequence of the other affinities which connect the remaining objects together, the same name may pass in succession from B to C; from C to D; and from Dto E?" In this way a "common appelation" will arise between A and E, and A and E have nothing in common. (Every metaphor, Stewart adds is "necessarily a transitive expression, although there are many transitive expressions which can, with no propriety, be said to be metaphorical". (Philosophical Essays, Pt.II, Ch.I,pp.I95-I96.)

"The emotion produced by beautiful objects is gay and pleasant. It sweetens and humanises the temper, is friendly to every benevolent affection, and tends to allay sullen and angry passions. It enlivens the mind, and disposes it to other it to other agreeable emotions, such as those of love, hope, and joy."[1] The emotion aroused by grandeur is "awful, solemn, and serious; inspires magnanimity and a contempt of what is mean".[2]

There is indeed a very real sense in which beauty and sublimity are in the mind; in the mind of the creator not in the mind of the spectator. (In so far as we project our feelings on to nature we create before we contemplate what moves us to aesthetic emotion.) To look for them in anything physical, thought of as merely physical, is to look for the living among the dead. If we imaginatively adopt the Epicurean philosophy while contemplating the sublimities of the world we find that the earth, the sea and the stars no longer have any aesthetic significance; "the clashing of atoms by blind chance" has nothing in it fit to elevate the soul with the emotion of grandeur. A "great work is a work of great power, great wisdom, and great goodness, well contrived for some important end. But power, wisdom, and goodness, are properly the attributes of mind only".[3] Th are expressed in the work, given a "body" there, clothed with sensible qualities there, and the work has grandeur by derivation. In the same way there is an original beauty and a reflected beauty, and original beauty is an attribute of the mind. The original beauty is an intellectual or moral beauty - the emphasis in the Inquiry on the communication of emotion has diminished in the Intellectua Powers - and its lustre is reflected on to the objects which manifest it. This is the main drift of Reid's opinion, that sensible beauty is borrowed beauty. Reid is not quite consistent. At least as we are constituted, he also says,

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1. Intellectual Powers, VIII? Ch.IV, p.498.
2. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.III, pp.494-495.
3. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.III, p.496.

beauty results from the commerce between the world of sense and the world of the mind. Thus the language of poetry is pleasing because it is a language in which properties are figuratively e changed between the two worlds.[I.]

But this doctrine of Reid's that beauty is in the mind is not of course the paradoxical doctrine of modern philosophers that beauty is in the mind contemplating, not in the object contemplated. According to Reid's doctrine beauty is in the object, though originally in a remoter object than the objects of sense, and there independently of anyone's contemplation of it; and derivatively in objects of sense and there independently of anyone's contemplation of it. The paradoxical doctrine in the words of Hutcheson which Reid uses to state it is that beauty is not "any quality supposed to be in the object which should, of itself, be beautiful, without relation to any mind which perceives it: for beauty, like other names of sensible ideas, properly denotes the perception of some mind; so cold, hot, sweet, bitter, denote the sensations in our minds."[2.] In looking at this paradox we can ignore as Reid does, the difference between original and derived beauty, and for convenience we shall also ignore the difference between beauty and sublimity.

The teaching of Locke on the nature of the secondary qualities is behind this paradox, Reid says. Locke "very properly distinguishes between the sensations which we have of heat and cold, for example, and "that quality or structure in the body which is adapted by Nature to produce those sensations in us".

"What remained to be determined was, whether the words, heat and cold, in common language, signify the sensations we feel, or the qualities of the object which are the cause of these sensations. Mr. Locke made heat and cold to signify only the sensations we feel, and not the qualities which are the cause of them. And in this, I apprehend, lay his mistake. For it is evident, from the use of

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I. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.III, p.497.
2. Inquiry Concerning Beauty (1st. edition) p. 37.

language, that hot and cold, sweet and bitter, are attributes of external objects and not of the person who perceives them. Hence, it appears a monstrous paradox to say, there is no heat in the fire, no sweetness in sugar; but, when explained according to Mr. Locke's meaning, it is only, like most other paradoxes, an abuse of words."[1]

Is this all there is in Reid's opinion to the paradox which turns beauty into feeling - the misapplication of a word? That it is one would naturally take to be the implication of the general analogy to which Reid gives such prominence between aesthetic taste and the taste of the palate, between beauty and the secondary qualities of bodies. The implication also of a number of its details, and especially of the contrast between beauty as an 'occult' quality, when all we know of it is how we are affected by it, and beauty as a quality "distinctly conceived and ....specified". The judgment that something is beauty, Reid calls in the first case an 'instinctive' judgment, and in the second case a 'rational judgment of beauty'.[2] They are, if this is all they are, simply matter of fact judgments. And we may notice here that in one place Reid makes the 'real' judgment in moral approbation simply a matter of fact judgment. He is illustrating the dependence of moral feeling on judgment. I see a man, he says, exerting himself energetically in a good cause. "I judge that this conduct merits esteem." Persuade me that he was bribed and my feelings are altogether different.[3]

Reid has obscured here the thing that he is contending for. We know what it is that moral approbation includes a judgment of moral fact. It is the analogy between beauty and the secondary qualities has more seriously obscured Reid's parallel contention. It is that aesthetic approbation includes a judgment of value which is a judgment of fact.

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1. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.IV, p.499.
2. Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.IV, pp.500-501.
3. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, pp.672-673.

There are two things common to all things which we call beautiful: they produce in us "a certain agreeable emotion" and this agreeable emotion" is accompanied with an opinion or belief of their having some perfection or excellence belonging to them". Grandeur "in objects" seems to me, Reid says, to be nothing but "such a degree of excellence, in one kind or another, as merits our admiration".[1]

An excellence or perfection, in Reid's view, is not a special quality which a thing has over and above its other qualities. It is not a further characteristic which the thing has because it has other characteristics. In so far as an excellence or a perfection is a quality of a thing it is some one or several or all of its constitutive qualities. The beauty of a painting is the arrangement of its colours and shapes. As an excellence or perfection it is the fact that this pattern is fit to arouse certain emotions, that it ought to be admired and praised. And this is a fact which is quite different from the fact that the thing could or does produce these emotions, and as much a fact,

This is the objectivity which Reid was contending for against Hutcheson and Hume, the objectivity of judgments of value. If we listen to "the dictates of common sense, we must be convinced that there is a real excellence in some things, whatever our feelings or our constitution be"; that a thing "has its excellence from its own constitution, and not from ours".[2] But Reid has conducted his argument as though it was the objectivity of a matter of fact judgment which has to be asserted, as though he wanted and was arguing for the admission that in everything that is beautiful or sublime there is something or other, existing independently of us, which causes us to feel certain emotions, and that this, whatever it is, is properly called the object's beauty or sublimity. It is some perfection or excellence, he adds, and adds it as though the whole point in dispute was not

1. Intellectual Powers, VIII Ch.III, p.494.
2. Intellectual Powers, VIII; Ch.III, p.495.

over the nature of an excellence or a perfection.

Reid selected the wrong feature of the theory of ideas for attention in trac the effect of the theory on opinions concerning beauty. He touched lightly the implications of its conceptual empiricism,[1] preoccupied with the general withdra from external reality he saw in the theory. In consequence his real dispute wi other philosophers is left in the shadow of a dispute which he could see when h reflected was a dispute over words. Aesthetic judgments as well as moral judgme he is maintaining, state facts about matters of fact, facts of a unique kind, the nature of which is indicated by the occurrence, explicitly or implicitly in both judgments of the word 'ought' or of one of its synonyms.

How does the aesthetic 'ought' differ from the 'ought' of moral obligation? Reid does not ask the question. He has a remark which points towards certain features which would have to be recognized in an answer. "There are some things that ought to please, and others that ought to displease. If they do not, it owing to some defect in the spectator."[2] Unlike a moral defect, this is a defe which it may or may not be in a man's powers to remove. 'Ought' here therefore does not imply 'can', and therefore failure to be or to do what one ought in th sense to be or to do does not carry anything analogous to guilt along with it.

Is it of any great importance whether or not moral judgments are factual judgments and moral concepts unique and objective? The issue between Reid and Hume is not one which Reid appears to regard as of any practical consequence: Theories of morals have no moral implications: they are related to our moral judgments as the theory of vision is to seeing.[3] This is not consistently Reid view "...there cannot be better evidence that a theory of morals, or of any particular virtue, is false, than when it subverts the practical rules of moral

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I. With a passing mention that Price had shown its significance in this connecti (Intellectual Powers, VIII, Ch.III, p.495.)

2. Intellectual Powers, VI, Ch.VI, p.453.

3. Active Powers, V, Ch.II, pp.642-643.

4. Active Powers, V, Ch.V, p.660; Cp.V, Ch.IV, p.646.

There is of course no question of a general theory of the nature of morality contradicting a practical moral rule and Reid does not suggest, as one would perhaps have expected him to (even if only in order to give a practical application to a common sense belief which would otherwise remain purely "speculative"); that we might come to think the distinction between right and wrong is less important than we had thought it was, if we become persuaded that it can be resolved into a difference in our feelings.

The consequence which moral subjectivity does carry with it is that there ca be no immutable morality. If what we call "a moral judgment" is no real judgmen but merely the expression of some feeling that we have, or is a real judgment but one merely, which states that we have that feeling, then all "the principles of morals which we have been taught to consider as an immutable law to all intelligent beings, have no other foundation but an arbitrary structure and fabr in the constitution of the human mind. So that, by a change in our structure, what is immoral might become moral, virtue might be turned into vice, and vice i virtue. And beings of a different structure, according to the variety of thei feelings, may have different, nay opposite measures of moral good and evil."[I.]

A real judgment has a tautological dependence on the constitution of one's nature and a real independence of it unless it is a judgment about oneself. We cannot "judge of visible objects" if the faculty of sight is missing, nor of beauty and deformity if we are without the faculty of taste. "If we suppose a being without any moral faculty in his fabric, I grant that he could not have th sentiments of blame and moral approbation.

"There are, therefore, judgments, as well as feelings, that are excited by the particular structure and fabric of the mind. But though it depends upon th fabric of a mind, whether it have such a judgment or not, it depends not upon th

I. Active Powers, V, Ch.VIII, pp.678-679.

fabric whether the judgment be true or not."[1]

A further consequence of the opinion that morality depends upon the arbitra constitution of our nature is that we could know nothing whatever of the moral character of God. Indeed this is to state the conclusion too weakly: since nothing "arbitrary or mutable can be conceived to enter into the description of a nature eternal, immutable, and necessarily existent," the consequence is that God has no moral character.[2]

"True or false in morals .... is necessarily so".[3] This will not be denied by anyone who allows that truth is there at all. What kind of evidence do we have for moral propositions which, if true, are necessarily true? Locke held that moral truths are capable of demonstration. His argument is that "the prec real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity or incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge." Lock's examples are the two proposition that there can be no injustice where there is no property, no government where there is absolute liberty; propositions, Locke says, "as certain as any demonstration in Euclid".[4]

Neither of these propositions, Reid remarks, is a demonstrated conclusion;[5] both are true by definition, and Reid would not call them moral truths. The propositions, Reid says, which are correctly to be called 'moral' are not 'abstract' propositions - Locke's argument applies only to abstract proposition but those which affirm "some moral obligation to be or not to be incumbent on one or more individual persons", which affirm "something to be the duty of perso that really exist".

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1. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.676.
2. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.676.
3. Intellectual Powers, V, Ch.Vi, p.454.
4. Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk.III, Ch.XI,p.I56; Bk.IV, Ch.III, p2
5. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.II, p.479.

The proposition that there is more merit in a generous action than in an action which is no more than just, is an abstract proposition and a moral proposition. (Reid has earlier called it a "moral axiom".) It is not the abstractness of Locke's propositions which disqualifies them as moral propositi Reid has already explained their disqualification.

Moral truths divide into two classes. There is the class of principles, of moral axioms: such principles as that we ought to be faithful to our engagements that we ought not to do to others anything which we would regard as unjust if done to ourselves in the same circumstances. No one who cannot see their truth can have it proved to him. Supposing that a man cannot see that he ought not t do to someone else what he would think wrong if done to himself. Howwould you reason with him? "You may possibly convince him by reasoning, that it is his interest to observe this rule; but this is not to convince him that it is his duty."[1] You can no more demonstrate to him that it is his duty than you can argue a blind man into seeing colours. The "first principles of morals, into which all moral reasoning may be resolved, are perceived intuitively, and in a manner more analogous tothe perceptions of sense than to the conclusions of demonstrativereasoning"[2]. There is no question then of demonstrating the first principles of morals. There are no premisses for the demonstration and these principles are already intuitively self-evident.

The second class of moral truths as constituted by the application of princi les to particular cases. This is not Reid's description of this class. The second class of moral truths consists, he says of those that are deduced by reasoning from those that are self-evident. We shall see in a moment that Reid appears to say that no moral propositions are demonstrable and then to say that some of them are. The appearance of contradiction is caused by a shift ~~in the~~

1. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.VI, p.591.
2. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.III, p.481.

in the meaning of 'demonstrable' and 'demonstrative evidence', and Reid adds to our difficulties by not marking off at the outset (as he does later on implicit the conclusions reached by moral reasoning as a sub-class within the class of derivative moral propositions.

Are any moral propositions demonstrable? The propositions, Reid says, "whic I think are properly called moral, are those that affirm some moral obligation be, or not to be incumbent on one or more individual persons. To such proposit ions, Mr Locke's reasoning does not apply, because the subjects of the proposit are not things whose real essence may be perfectly known. They are creatures o God; their obligation results from the constitution which God hath given them, and the circumstances in which he hath placed them. That an individual hath su a constitution, and is placed in such circumstances, is not an abstract and necessary, but a contingent truth. It is a matter of fact, and, therefore, not capable of demonstrative evidence, which belongs only to necessary truths."[1.]

Is our duty in our actual circumstances ever demonstrable? It is never demonstrable. The "moral man" is not the abstraction Locke made him out to be "a corporeal rational being".[2.] The moral man is a man in the particularity of h individual nature, with his duty determined by it and by his concrete circumst- ances. His duty in the different circumstances in which he finds himself is never demonstrable, because it depends upon contingent matters of fact, and the as such are incapable of demonstration and are therefore incapable of entering premisses into a demonstration. This seems to be the reason which Reid is givi for the indemonstrability of all our actual duties.

Is Reid maintaining that we can never know for certain what we ought to do any particular set of circumstances; that we can never know it for certain bec our obligations are determined partly by the constitution of our nature and

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1. Intellectual Powers, VII, Ch.II, p.479.
2. Essay, Bk.III, Ch.XI, p.157.

partly by the nature of our circumstances, and these are matters of fact about which we can never have knowledge but only "probable opinion".[I.] Or is Reid maintaining merely that our actual duties are incapable of demonstration in a logician's technical sense of demonstration (sharing with Locke the view which assimilates all demonstration to mathematical demonstration); maintaining this, but not implying by this that they are never certain?

"The evidence which every man hath of his own existence, though it be irresistible, is not more demonstrative. And the same thing may be said of the evidence which every man hath, that he is a moral agent, and under certain moral obligati

This is the beginning of the paragraph which follows the paragraph we are considering. It is not perhaps entirely decisive against the first interpretation of that paragraph, since Reid may be meaning by the obligations for which we have evidence as irresistible as the evidence for our own existence, the general obligations which are principles of morality. It is at least a reminder that there are contingent matters of fact which, though formally indemonstrable can be known with absolute certainty.

If the first interpretation is correct, Reid is about to contradict himself For on the next page he says:

"I apprehend, that, in every kind of duty we owe to God or man.....the obligation of the most general rules of duty is self-evident; that the application those rules to particular actions is often no less evident; and that, when it is not evident, but requires reasoning, that reasoning can very rarely be of the demonstrative, but must be of the probable kind. Sometimes it depends upon the temper, and talents, and circumstances of the man himself; sometimes upon the character and circumstances of others; sometimes upon both; and these are things which admit not of demonstration."

I. Raphael, The Moral Sense, pp.171-172.

Now here Reid really is saying something about uncertainty in moral judgment When it is not perfectly obvious that a general rule covers a particular case (as it often is, as it often is as evident, for example, that we ought to keep this promise as that we ought in general to keep our promises): where we have t reason out what we should do, taking into consideration our own circumstances and the circumstances of other people, then we can very seldom reach conclusion which have demonstrative evidence and must content ourselves with probable opinion.[I.] Thus a magistrate knows that he ought to promote the good of the community which has put him in office. He will very often be doubtful about th best means to adopt and very rarely able to resolve his doubts by "demonstrativ evidence", and will have to decide on what "appears most probable". But few moral cases require reasoning out. In "the common occurrences of life a man of integrity ....sees his duty without reasoning as he sees the highway".

In the passage which we have just been considering 'demonstrative evidence' is contrasted with 'probable' evidence as conclusive with inconclusive evidence In the earlier passage this contrast is absent; the contrast is between logical different types of evidence. 'Demonstrative evidence' is one type of evidence, the evidence forthe propositions which state our actual duties is never demonstrative, but there is no implication that it is never conclusive.

How is it possible for anyone to be morally mistaken when he is not mistake with regard to any relevant matters of fact? It is not possible, Reid implies if moral judgments are expressions of some of our feelings or assertions that we have these feelings; for either nothing is asserted, or nothing that could b false unless there is lying. A mistaken moral judgment is logically possible o Reid's view of the nature of a moral judgment, but how could the mistake ever

I. Virtue does not suffer, Reid remarks at the end of the chapter. "To act against what appears most probable in a matter of duty, is as real a trespass against the first principles of morality, as to act against demonstration."

come about? On this Reid has very little to say. A man's moral sensitivity depends to a large extent on his moral character. And from "the varieties of education, of fashion, of prejudices and of habits, men will come to have conflicting moral opinions. The variety of their moral opinions is not greate but much less than the variety of their opinions on "speculative" matters, and "as easily accounted for", Reid says, "from the common causes of error, in the one case as in the other"[I.]. But there is no parallel between the cases except where the speculative matters are matters for which the only evidence is self-e evidence. And a failure to see what is self-evident is finally inexplicable.

The moral history and moral geography of mankind is altogether misinterpret Stewart considers, if it is thought to prove that there is no fundamental unanimity in men's moral opinions. In examining the moral codes of different times and different places, allowance has to be madetfirst for the different physical circumstances of peoples and for their different degrees of civilizat And when this is done the illusion of fundamental contradiction between moral codes begins to disappear. Thus, for example, where soil and climate are so beneficent that the necessities of life and many of its luxuries are there for the taking, the rights of property will be very contracted. People will think about most things as everyone does about light and air, that they belong to no one in particular. Theft as a rule will not be wrong or will be a trivial offence. But if what is stolen is something that a man has made for himself and values as his own, the offence will assume the proportions that it has everywhere else. As an example of the difference which different degrees of civilization make to moral rules, private vengeance is one thing in a society such as ours and morally quite another thing in a society where the laws give the individual no adequate protection.

I. Active Powers, III, Pt,III, Ch.V, p.587.

External circumstances modify the application of moral principles and the external features of an action do not reveal its moral character. The disposit expressed in an action gives the action its moral significance. The Indians around Hudson's Bay kill their aged parents, but in filial piety; they are not to be cited as evidence that there are no innate practical principles.

Nature through moral principles prescribes ends to our conduct; it is left to our reason to calculate the best means to attain to these ends. Thus we oug to aim at our own happiness and at the happiness of other men, but this princip does not define "the constituents of happiness", nor the way to it. Differing in opinion with regard to the nature of hapiness and the means to attain it, me must often differ in particular moral judgments, while they acknowledge and because they acknowledge the same moral principles.

Stewart is not planing down the content of moral principles until there is no material left in them over which there might be disagreement. He recognizes many moral principles besides those which require us to seek our own and other people's happiness. He thinks vaguely of them all as prescribing ends to our conduct, and leaving the means to our own discovery. He thinks also of them as primary rules of duty. Stewart is no kind of utilitarian. In his view the way to public and private happiness is governed by these rules, and they are to be obeyed not because, or not only because, obedience leads towards happiness, and disobedience away from it, but because they are rules of unalterable right and wrong.[I.]

2. The Principles of Action

Moral distinctions, Hume argues, cannot be factual distinctions. A statement of fact by itself has no practical implications; no one does anything or avoids anything simply as a consequence of acknowledging its truth. But men

I. Active and Moral Powers, Bk.II, Ch.III,

are "deterr'd from some actions by the opinion of injustice, amd impell'd to others by that of obligation". Moral judgments as such have practical consequences, and are therefore not factual judgments; the truth and falsity which belongs to factual judgments does not belong to them. They cannot therefore proceed from reason which is concerned with "truth or falsehood". The "merit" of an action could not possibly be derived from its "conformity to reason"; no actions can be either reasonable or unreasonable except in a "figurative and improper way of speaking" which is philosophically intolerable.

There are two respects in which reason can directly influence our actions. It may inform us of the existence of an object which is the "proper object" of some "passion". The passion is aroused and it moves us to action. Or reason indicates the means to ends dictated by desires("discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us means of exerting any passion"), and because we will the ends we will the means. And that an object is an object of certain kind and that the means to it are of a certain kind are both matter of fact about which we may make true or false judgments. False judgments about either might be said figuratively and misleadingly to make the passions and actions connected with them unreasonable. There is no other truth and falsity in morals, no other reasonableness or unreasonableness in actions.[I.]

"As mankind have, in all ages, Reid says, understood <u>reason</u> to mean the power by which not only our speculative opinions, but our actions ought to be regulated we may say, with perfect propriety, that all vice is contrary to reason; that, by reason, we are to judge of what we ought to do, as well as of what we ought to believe.....

"There are other phrases which have been used on the same side of the

I. <u>Treatise</u>, Bk,III, Pt.I, Sec.I, pp.456-466.

question, which I see no reason for adopting, such as - acting contrary to the relations of things - contrary to the reason of things - to the fitness of things - to the truth of things - to absolute fitness. These phrases have not the authority of common use, which, in matters of language is great. They seem to have been invented by some authors, with a view to explain the nature of vi but I do not think they answer that end. If intended as definitions of vice, they are improper; because in the most favourable sense they can bear, they extend to every kind of foolish and absurd conduct, as well as to that which is vicious."[1]

Reid has not changed his mind as to the source of our knowledge of moral distinctions in now speaking of reason as the power by which we judge of what ought to do. The 'moral faculty', 'conscience', 'moral sense', 'reason'; these are ~~are~~ all different names for the same thing, Reid does not say this, but he would have spoken his mind if he had said it. They are all of them sanctioned by common usage. The term 'moral sense' may need some apology. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson gave it wide currency, but it is "not new"; at least expressions very similar to it are old, the "sensus recti et honesti" in Latin and the "sense of duty"[2] in English. The moral faculty was given the name "moral sense" no doubt because of the evident analogy between it and the external senses. Philosophers made the term 'moral sense' into a term of theory by abridging the functions of sense, by making it feeling without judgment. "This I take to be an abuse of a word."[3] Reid would deny that he uses the term in the interests of a theory: it not putting forward a philosophical theory to oppose a philosophical theory by

I. Active Powers, V, Ch.VII, p.676.
2. Reid paid considerable attention to the way in which the word "reason" was ordinarily used in moral contexts, but none to the ordinary significance of oth expressions which he treats as equivalents. (Beattie remarks briefly that 'conscience' is a term applied to a man's moral "consideration of his own condu and that philosophers had invented the term 'moral sense'. (Elements of Moral Science, Vol.II, Ch.I, p.15.) 4. Active Powers, V, ~~Pt.III~~, Ch.VII, p.674.

pointing to the objective implications of the word 'sense'.

The controversy in which it is debated whether 'moral sense' or 'reason' is the proper description of the moral faculty, but in which the question of the objectivity of moral distinctions does not necessarily arise, attracts no more than Reid's casual notice, and at the point where the rationalists seemed to be attempting explanatory definitions of virtue and vice. Otherwise it is a controversy to which he is indifferent. But if the faculty by which we frame judgments which must be true or false is to be called 'reason', then it becomes philosophically important to call the moral faculty 'reason'.

Reid once held still more radically that the whole controversy as to "whether moral distinctions are discerned by Reason or Sentiment" was trivial; it could be settled and the manner in which it was to be settled showed its triviality. I. Consider, Reid says, the agreement between the disputants: They agree (i) that there is a power of the mind by which we distinguish in "speculative" matters between truth and falsehood; (ii) a power of the mind by which we can determine which ends are "eligible"; (iii) a power of the mind by which we can determine the means appropriate to these ends. They agree that the first and third of these powers are to be called 'reason'. They agree in their moral judgments (if they disagree it is not because they are divided on the question as to whether moral distinctions are perceived by reason or sentiment). What are the disagreements? One says that the second of these powers should be called "reason" and the other denies that it should. They have the same moral perceptions. "But says one, this perception is not feeling but seeing; says the other is not feeling but seeing." Their dispute is to be settled "not by arguments but by authority", by the authority of customary speech. The truth is that the "different powers of the mind are not distinct individual beings, nor are the

I. In one of his discourses to the literary society at Glasgow (Aberdeen MSS. 2131.3.) This discourse is undated, but Reid mentions it in mentioning his conversion in moral theory.

limits that divide one power from another fixed by nature. We divide the powe of the mind as we divide a joynt of meat, as best suits our convenience and occasions."

Reid came to see that the real point in the dispute was whether or not mor distinctions are sui generis and objective, and it became a matter of importan to him which words were used. Objective words are needed to mark objective distinctions: 'reason', and 'judgment' and not 'sentiment' and 'feeling'.

Stewart does not share to any great extent Reid's veneration for common language because it is common language. Which words are used here matters to Stewart only in so far as the recognition of the objectivity and immutability right and wrong is kept safe. It is useful to say that moral distinctions are perceived by reason; the word is an emphatic safeguard. On the other hand it perhaps suggests that moral discernment is the result of reasoning. "Moral se is a harmless enough expression in itself, although it has come to have danger associations. Neither of those terms, nor any other, throws any light on the origin of our moral conceptions and judgments. The unique, unanalysable and objective concepts of morality may be legitimately and unilluminatingly ascrib to reason, or to the understanding. If we have laid it down that every simpl idea is to have its origin in some "sense", we shall have to speak instead of moral sense. And if the ideas of time, of number, of causation were "as impor ant as those of right and wrong, or had been as much under the review of philosophers, we might perhaps have had a sense of Time, a sense of Number, an a sense of Causation".[I.]

The moral faculty is an active power as well as an intellectual power; the judgments which state our duties, though factual judgments are practical judgments; a regard to duty is a rational principle of action.

I. Outlines of Moral Philosophy, Pt.II, Ch.I, Sec.VI, p.24ff; Active and Moral Powers, Vol.II, Bk.IV, Pt.I, Ch. II, p.246.

By the "principles of action" Reid explains that he means "everything tha incites us to act". When "moral imputation" is involved, nothing is to be regarded as a man's action unless it is something which he "previously concei and willed or determined to do". The words "a man's action" have a much more general meaning, wide enough to allow us to speak of "involuntary actions". Reid is enquiring into the principles of human action in this very general sense.[1] They fall, he thinks, into three classes and might be called 'mechani 'animal' and 'rational' principles.

No thought and no intention are required for an action which proceeds fro the operation of a mechanical principle. What is done instinctively and wha is done by habit may be done without our even noticing it. Instincts and habits are the two different kinds of mechanical principles. To breathe is 'instinctive', to swallow, to imitate. The habits which are active principl are those which do not merely facilitate an action, but those which incline towards its repetition.

Animal principles "operate upon the will" but do not presuppose any exer of reason.[2] Animal principles may be divided into 'appetites', 'desires', 'affections' (each of these words being given some arbitrary precision). An appetite is a compound of "uneasy sensation", always more or less specific, a of a desire which keeps pace with it, and it is periodical in its occurrence In desire, as distinguished from appetite, there is no single sensation as t is, for example , a single sensation of hunger, and there is no cycle of wan and satiety.

I. Active Powers, III, Pt.I, Ch.I, p.543.

2. Though Stewart is "always unwilling" to differ from Reid, he is bound to say that the names which Reid has given to these two classes of active princ les are beyond excuse. If any principles are common to animals and men, ins incts are, and to make desires and affections sub-classes of the class of animal principles runs Reid into obvious absurdities of speech, when the desires and affections are particularized (Active ~~Powers,~~ and Moral Powers, Vol.I, Introduction, p.125.)

Desires may have persons or things for their objects. Affections have persons for their objects, and lead us to desire either their good or their hurt; are therefore either benevolent or malevolent affections. (It sounds oddly, Reid admits, but it is convenient to speak of malevolent affections, ar there is the expression 'ill-affected' as some justification.) It seems to be Reid's opinion that the difference between 'desires' and 'affections' is constituted by the difference in the proportions and relations of desire and feeling which are components of both. In affections feeling predominates and desire takes its rise from feeling. When desires and affections are vehement, tempestuous, obsessive, they are commonly called 'passions'.

Mechanical principles of action operate without our will. Animal principl operate upon our will. There are also rational principles of action in man. Without these, and left simply to appetites,desires and affections, our life would be without direction. The function of rational principles is to prescri ultimate ends to our will and to govern our life accordingly. Reason has "in ages, among the learned and unlearned, been conceived to have two offices - to regulate our belief, and to regulate our actions and conduct..... To act reas ably, is a phrase no less common in all languages, than to judge reasonably. . A way of speaking so universal among men, common to the learned and the unlear in all nations and in all languages, must have a meaning. To suppose it to be words without meaning, is to treat, with undue contempt, the common sense of mankind."[I.]

That it comes within the province of reason to determine means to ends no philosopher of course has denied. But reason is not a principle of action unl it determines "the ends we ought to pursue, or the preference due to one end above another". Hume denies that reason has any competence in this matter. "

I. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.I, p.579.

shall endeavour to shew," Reid says,"that among the various ends of human actions, there are some of which, without reason, we could not even form a conception; and that, as soon as they are conceived, a regard to them is, by our constitution, not only a principle of action but a leading and governing principle, to which all our animal principles are subordinate, and to which they ought to be subject,

"These I shall call rational principles; because they can exist only in beings endowed with reason, and because, to act from these principles, is wh has always been meant by acting according to reason."[I.]

The ends prescribed to our conduct by reason are our "good upon the who (our general interest) and our moral duty. As ends they are principles of action; as prescribed by reason, rational principles. We live as reasonable men when these principles in fact govern our conduct, and we act unreasonabl when we act in contradiction of either of them.

The conception of our good upon the whole is plainly a rational concepti Anything in which a man finds any part of his happiness is good to him, and is desired as soon as it is thought of. In the early part of our lives our is at the disposal of desires which do not look beyond "particular and prese objects", at the disposal of whichever of these desires happens to be the strongest at the time. When we are older, we learn by the exercise of our reason to think of consequences, looking backwards and forwards; we learn to weigh one good against another, present satisfaction against future loss. W form the highly abstract and general conception of our good upon the whole, conception which is thus clearly "the offspring of reason, and can be only i beings endowed with reason. And if this conception gives rise to any princi of action in man,which he had not before, that principle may very properly b

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I. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.I, p.580.

called a rational principle of action."[1]

There is no doubt that this conception does give rise to a principle of action, does supply a motive to our will. There is a contradiction, Reid is nearly certain, in supposing an intelligent being to have the notion of good and not to desire it. There is atany rate some sort of impossibility in cont lating with complete indifference something which we know to be inseparable f our happiness.

The "sense of duty" is an active principle. The judgment that this is my duty is a practical judgment; it states what I ought to do. It is a factual judgment; if the judgment is a true judgment, it is a fact that this is what ought to do. And moral judgments are not "dry and unaffecting", From the constitution of our nature, even if there is no other necessity in the matter and Reid is inclined to think that there is - we cannot regard something as o duty and regard it with perfect indifference.[2] The sense of duty is a ratio principle of action - by common consent. Reid has nothing to add to his stat ment that to act as duty requires is part of what has always been meant by "acting according to reason".

It is self-evident that we ought to prefer our total good to any partial good standing in its way, and self-evident again that a concern for our duty ought to override any contrary inclination; and an evident consequence that t passions ought to be under the control of reason, for the passions demand immediate satisfaction with no concern for our general interest and none for right and wrong.

But at least sometimes in Reid, to oppose "the common sense of mankind" i simply to oppose "the common language of mankind". When Hume says "that men ought to be governed by their passions only, and that the use of reason is to

I. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.II, p.581.
2. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.II,pp.580-581; V, Ch.VII, p.677.

subservient to the passions, this, at first hearing, appears a shocking parad repugnant to good morals and common sense; but , like most other paradoxes, when explained according to his meaning, it is nothing but an abuse of words.

"For, if we give the name of passion to every principle of action, in ever degree, and give the name of reason solely to the power of discerning the fit ness of means to ends, it will be true that the use of reason is to be subser vient to the passions."[I.]

Therational principles of action have authority over the whole of our conduct. Their requirements can never really conflict; in the justice of Go duty is always our interest. In their apparent conflict we do our duty, beca it is our duty, and if we need any further reason for doing it, because to do otherwise is to act immediately against our happiness. A prudential virtue w very properly lack the exalted happiness which accompanies disinterested virt It will at least escape the misery of vice. The man who does what his duty requires is thus even so far as this world is concerned looking after his hapiness most effectively. If he is looking after his happiness effectively, he will find that he is led to a life of virtue. The principle of enlightene self-interest leads "directly to the virtues of Prudence, Temperance, and For de. And , when we consider ourselves as social creatures, whose happiness or misery is very much connected with that of our fellow-men; when we consider t there are many benevolent affections planted in our constitution, whose exert make a capital part of our good and enjoyment: from these considerations, th

I. In a later passage (III, Pt.III, Ch.II, p.501.) which otherwise closely reproduces this passage Reid speaks as though he thought Hume was maintaining something really paradoxical which could "only be defended by a gross and palpable abuse of words".

2. Reid shares the widespread eighteenth century belief in the superlative happiness arising from a consciousness of virtue. It is something which he perhaps owed partly to the instruction of Turnbull who had learnt from Shaftesbury. God Himself is happy, according to Turnbull,"from no other sour but his absolute moral perfection". (Principles of Moral Philosophy p.iii.)

principle leads us also, though more indirectly, to the practise of justice, humanity, and all the social virtues.

"It is true, that a regard to our own good cannot, of itself, produce any benevolent affection. But, if such affections be a part of our constitution, if the exercise of them make a capital part of our happiness, a regard to ou own good ought to lead us to cultivate and exercise them, as every benevolen affection makes the good of others to be our own."[1]

Duty and interest prescribe the same conduct. They are both "reasonable motives to action", but entirely different. Anyone may be "satisfied of thi who attends to his own conceptions, and the language of all mankind shews it When I say, This is my interest, I mean one thing; whenI say, It is my duty, mean another thing."[2]

Is it our duty to act with regard to our interest? Reid perhaps seems t hesitate. The principle of a regard to our good upon the whole gives us the conception of a right and wrong in human conduct. There is a "kind of self-approbation" when we have done right in this way and, a "kind of remorse" for folly.[3] But Reid is not really hesitating: He is saying that we could make these quasi-moral judgments on our ~~own~~ conduct independently of any moral judgments we might make upon it; we could make them even if we lacked what strictly a moral sense. In the Intellectual Powers the principle that we ou to seek our own happiness is mentioned as one of the first principles of mor[4]

Our duties unmistakably include, Stewart maintains, a duty to ourselves; the neglect of private good is morally wrong. If it does not call for the same indignation as injury to others, that is because it punishes itself, an our indignation is softened by pity. We all think that the man who has beha

I. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.III, p.584.
2. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.V, p.587.
3. Active Powers, III, Pt.III, Ch.II, p.582.
4. VII. Ch.III, p.480.

with wilful improvidence deserves to suffer for it and he thinks so himself when he reflects. And his remorse is not merely a regret for lost hapiness; h is dissatisfied not only with the "condition" but with his conduct. Since improvidence is immoral, a belief in rewards and punishments after death makes every bad action worse.[1]

What gives moral worth to an action? Every human action "takes its denomination and its moral nature from the motive with which it is performed". An act is not an act of benevolence unless it is done from benevolence, an act of gratitude must be done from a sense of gratitude, an act of obedience from regard to a command. And in general "that is an act of virtue which is done from a regard to virtue".[2] If we ask "whether an action deserving moral approbation, must be done with the belief of its being morally good"? we are asking, Reid says, a question in practical "morals" and therefore a question which is to be referred not to moral theory but to the moral faculty. And any the which is committed to answering it in a way which conflicts with the answer it unhesitatingly receives from the moral faculty is in the position of any theor in conflict with fact.[3] An action to have moral worth must be done with the belief that it is morally good.

The question and answer, as Reid words them, are ambiguous. Is it enough that the action be done with the belief that it is morally good, or must it be done with this belief as the motive for doing it?

There is, Reid maintains, a set of self-evident propositions respecting guilt, innocence and moral worth,[4] and the proposition under consideration take its place among them. Everything that we do is either right, wrong, or morall indifferent; and in everything that we do our conscience is altogether silent,

I. Active and Moral Powers, Vol.II, Bk.IV, Pt.II, Sec.I.
2. Active Powers, V, Ch.VI, p.667.
3. Active Powers, V, Ch.IV, p.646.
4. Active Powers, V, Ch.IV, pp.646-647.

or it informs us that what we are doing is right, wrong or morally indifferer
If a man does something that is wrong, without the least suspicion that it i
his conscience either silent or pronouncing the action indifferent he acts
innocently. He does not deserve either condemnation or approbation. Would
any moralist disagree? Reid is sure that the disagreement would be merely
verbal. He is considering simply the action done and the disposition with
which it was done, disregarding previous circumstances. "If there was any
previous culpable negligence or inattention which led him to a wrong judgmen
or hindered his forming a right one, that I do not exculpate." The moralist
who will not allow that a man acting with a clear conscience must be acting
innocently, take his past and present conduct as a single whole, and in the
whole there will perhaps be something to blame. Reid takes his conduct to
pieces so as to put the blame where it lies. If a man does what his conscie
condemns, he incurs guilt and deserves condemnation, even though his conscie
should happen to be misinformed. If a man does what his conscience requires
him to do, he deserves approbation. Now if he does what his conscience requ
him to do he does it with some regard to the fact that he ought to do it, or
with none. The second alternative is "not supposable"; moral judgments can
leave the will unaffected. Reid might therefore have claimed that the ambig
in the proposition we are considering is of no account, since an action done
with the belief that it is our duty is unavoidably an action done with this
belief as a motive. But an important obscurity remains. Is the proposition
asserting that a regard to the rectitude of an action is the only motive whi
has moral worth? Passages which point to one answer have their indications
cancelled by other passages. The question of the proper object of moral app
ation arose when Reid was comparing the affections with the virtues and vice

What is the difference between them, between, for example, the affection of benevolence and the virtue of benevolence? "Thevirtue of benevolence is a fixed purpose or resolution to do good when we have opportunity, from a conviction that it is right, and is our duty. The affection of benevolence a propensity to do good, from natural constitution or habit, without regard to rectitude or duty."[1] One might with some hesitation take this to imply that a regard to the rectitude of an action is the only motive that has mor truth. And in the chapter which has the proposition we are concerned with its title Reid says that the "more weight the rectitude of the action has i determining me to do it, the more I approve of my own conduct." On the oth hand when he is faced with the objection that we approve immediately of benevolence or of gratitude without "inquiring whether they are practised f a persuasion that they are our duty", he says that we know that they are ri without reflection.

Had Reid then bee asked whether it is better to do an act of charity wh is our duty from a sense of duty or from charity, we cannot be sure how we could have answered.

There is, Hume maintains, a logical absurdity in the view that it is a regard to the virtue off an action which makes the action virtuous. "Before can have such a regard, the action must be really virtuous; and this virtue must be deriv'd from some virtuous motive: And consequently the virtuous motive must be different from the regard to the virtue of the action."[2]

Reid paraphrases Hume's argument in order to bring out its "full streng Our judgment cannot alter the nature of an action. If it is wrong and we j it right , it is still wrong; no proposition becomes true by being believe to be true. The conclusion therefore is that a man who does what he mistak

I. Active Powers, II, Ch.IV, p.540
2. Treatise, Bk.III, Pt.II, Sec.I, p.478.

believes to be right cannot act virtuously, nor viciously by doing what he thinks is wrong, unless in fact it is wrong. A conclusion, Reid affirms, wh contradicts first principles of morals and the plainest common sense.[I.]

How was Reid able to arrive at this misunderstanding of Hume? One of Hum sentences seems to have immobilized his attention, and although he quotes versions of Hume's argument from different parts of the Treatise, this senten is almost all he sees: "An action must be virtuous before we can have a rega to its virtue".

Reid's reply to Hume can be moved across from the substitute argument to Hume's. It amounts to this: Hume has conjured up the illusion of circularit out of an ambiguity which is present in most of the moral nouns and their corresponding adjectives. Virtue, goodness, rectitude in an action apart fro the agent is not the same thing as virtue, goodness, rectitude in the action a performed by the agent. Virtue in the action considered "abstractly", that i apart from the disposition of the agent who performs it, consists in this, "Tha it is an action which ought to be done by those who have the power and opport ity, and the capacity of perceiving their obligation to do it. ....And this goodness is inherent in its nature, and inseparable from it. No opinion or judgment of an agent can in the least alter its nature." Virtue in the actio as performed by the agent is a matter of the disposition with which the actio performed, a disposition which at least includes some regard to the fact that is one's duty.

The reference to the agent's capacity to perceive his obligation comes surprisingly into Reid's explanation of the virtue which is in the action abstractly. Reid is engaged in dispelling the illusion of logical vice from the proposition that to be virtuous an action must be done with a regard to i

I. Active Powers, V, Ch.IV, p.648.

virtue, and in providing for our condemnation or approval when we have acted
moral error.

CONCLUSION

"The whole of English and French philosophy in the eighteenth century come from Locke and its principle is the tabula rasa. Reid grounded Scottish philosophy on the contrary principle and in so doing he raised himself above his century and from Scotland reached across to Koenisberg. Kant in effect, a Reid, proposed to establish in metaphysics and morals speculative and practica laws which depend on the constitution of human reason itself, laws which are n derived from experience and which alone make experience possible. It is the s enterprise differently carried out."[I.]

Two different enterprises, as Cousin elsewhere recognizes, with some simil in their execution. The philosophy of Common Sense attempted a kind of 'transcendental' justification of the principles of common sense. They are, Stewart maintained, the presuppositions of experience, the vincula of its coherence. We cannot act, Reid and Stewart maintained, on other principles. And their foundation is in the constitution of the mind; they are, Stewart said "elements of human reason". They are elicited but not contributed by the 'matt of experience. But they are metaphysical principles, and through them our cognition is conformed to its objects.

One of the ways in which the philosophy of Common Sense ended was in ambigu with the introduction into it of a proposition which seemed to bring it to conclusions similar to conclusions in the Kantian philosophy. Hamilton Kantian Reid (at least in words) with the axiome of relativity. The axiom of relativit divides off things as they are "absolutely and in themselves" from things as they appear, so that everything that we know is "phenomenal - phenomenal of the unknown". Ferrier Hegelianized Hamilton: subject and object are the syllables

I. Cousin, Philosophie Ecossaise, p.581.

of a single ontological word and are meaningless apart from their place in its structure. There were no phenomenalistic revisions of Hamilton comparable to the phenomenalistic revisions of Kant. With Ferrier the impulse which Reid ha given to the development of Scottish philosophy died away.

In Hamilton an ambiguous ending to the philosophy of Common Sense. In Brown transition from the philosophy of Common Sense to the type of philosophy most opposite to it. Intuitive and irresistible principles of belief, Brown acknowledges, and in particular an irresistible belief in an external world, bu no more known of it than the fact that it is something which causes usto have t sensations which,with constructions out of them, make up the entire world of ou experience. Its conversion into permanent possibilities of sensation would no be a drastic revision.

Brown's investigation into the natural history of some of our common sense beliefs and of the notions involved in them also anticipated Mill; anticipated the "Psychological Method" which Mill set against the "Introspective Method" of Reid and Hamilton, and by which he undertook to explain the origin of beliefs which they held to be grounded upon inexplicable intuitions into the truth of things, and as part of the explanation to show how what was without evidence had come to appear self-evident. With Mill's Examination of the Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton (1765), the philosophy of Common Sense went out of date, both for those who thought with Mill and those who opposed him.

The philosophy of Common Sense has some features that will hold it back fro oblivion. Either there are no 'ideas' in thinking, remembering, perceiving, or there is nothing but ideas. A crude proposition, and much of Reid's discussion of it is crude, but it is too important both in itself and for the interpretat ion of the history of philosophy from Descartes to Hume for philosophers ever

to be over and done with it. "Common sense settles questions which philosophers have raised. It is a philosophy prior to philosophy." The philosophy of Common Sense arose in order to make some such claim. As it is one which deeply involves the nature both of philosophy and of common sense, it is not one which philosophers can altogether ignore.

1. Jouffroy, Mélanges Philosophiques, p. 145.

APPENDIX : MANUSCRIPTS OF REID, BEATTIE AND STEWART.

Reid After the death in 1942 of Miss Hilda Paterson of Birkwood, Banchory the large collection of Reid MSS. which had come down to her as a descendant of Reid's was presented by her niece to the library of King's College, Aberdeen. As a brief indication there are in this collection:

(1) Bundles of papers on mathematical topics and on topics from the various branches of natural philosophy. These papers are all short and in a more or less rough condition.

(2) A number of philosophical papers. Their condition also very rough and unfinished.

(3) Lectures on pneumatology, ethics, politics, jurisprudence and on "the Culture of the Mind" delivered at Glasgow.

(4) Several discourses read to the literary society at Glasgow.

The lectures on pneumatology and ethics, the discourses and the more substantial of the philosophical papers form the basic material of the Intellectual and Active Powers of which these are fragmentary drafts. There is not much in this material which has not been turned into one or other of these books.

(5) The MS. of the Intellectual Powers (substantially complete) and of the Active Powers (Essays I-IV)

(6) The MS. of the Philosophical Orations, four Latin orations delivered at King's College 1757-1762. (These have been edited by W.R. Humphries, Aberde University Studies, No.113.)

(7) Criticism and Remarks on the first volume of Stewart's Elements

(8) Drafts of a few letters.

Most of the papers belong to Reid's Glasgow period; there are some from

time of hisAberdeen professorship and a few are still earlier. The dates ran from 1736-1792.

There is also in the library of King's College the "Notes of a Course of Lectures on Natural Philosophy" given by Reid at King's College during the se ion 1757-1758.

The library of the University of Edinburgh has part of Reid's "Lectures o the Fine Arts", given at Clasgow and a student's copy of his "Lectures on Log also given at Clasgow. (The logic lectures are in a volume with the title "Observations on Logic by Several Professors".)

There are letters of Reid's in the British Museum and in the National Library of Scotland, and in the National Library of Scotland an essay of Reid on Erasmus.

Beattie The library of King's College, Aberdeen has a large collection of Beattie MSS. Four items are of some philosophical interest: "The Castle of Scepticism", an allegory against Hume, Hobbes and Voltaire (edited by E.C. Mossner, University of Texas Studies in English XXVII);"Hints for an Answer t Dr.Priestley"; a note-book containing disconnected philosophical reflections; "Lectures on Moral Philosophy and Logic", given at Marischal College. There a student's copy of the lectures in the library of the University of Glasgow.

Stewart Stewart's papers seem to have disappeared. His son destroyed many o them. (Stewart's Collected Works, VolVIII, editor's Introduction.) The library of the University of Edinburgh has four sets of lecture notes taken down by his students, three in moral philosophy (all substantially identical and substantially identical with the Outlines of Moral Philosophy) and one on political economy; a diary of tours, 1797-1803; an essay on the origin o

Sanscrit; and a Stewart "scrap-book"; some letters.

The National Library of Scotland has Notes on political economy taken from Stewart's lectures at Edinburgh, 1803-1804; the corrected proof of a fragment o the Active Powers; some letters of Stewart's .

The British Museum has some letters of Stewart's.